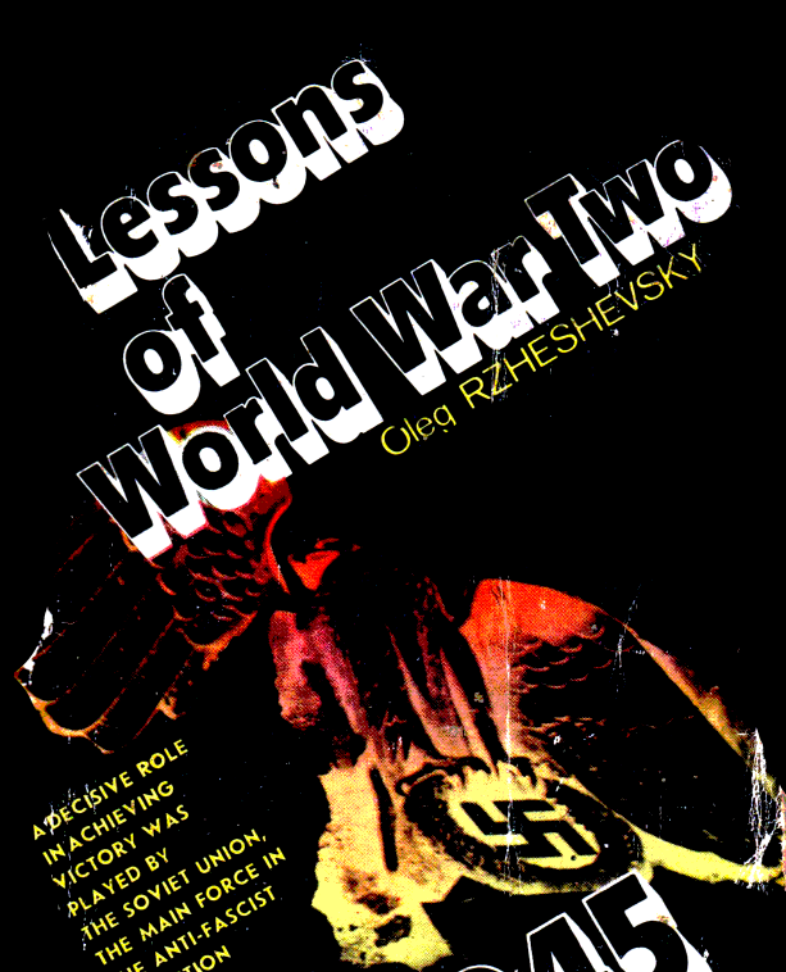
Lessons of World War Two

Oleg RZHESHEVSKY



A DECISIVE ROLE IN ACHIEVING VICTORY WAS PLAYED BY THE SOVIET UNION, THE MAIN FORCE IN THE ANTI-FASCIST COALITION

1939 1945

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INTRODUCTION

In the early morning of September 1, 1939 the German battleship *Schleswig-Holstein* suddenly opened fire on the Polish garrison of Westerplatte on the Baltic Sea coast. Simultaneously Nazi planes bombed aerodromes and communication and administrative centres in Poland, and ground troops of Hitler's armed forces, the Wehrmacht, invaded its territory. Two days later in answer to Germany's attack Britain and France declared war; Australia and New Zealand followed, and a bit later the Union of South Africa and Canada.

That is how the Second World War started. It involved 61 states and 80 per cent of the world population, and lasted six years. Its fiery storm swept over the vast expanses of Europe, Asia and Africa, extended to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and reached the coasts of Australia. The war carried off more than 50 million lives and caused widespread devastation.

History knows no war crimes more atrocious than those committed in the Second World War by the fascist aggressors in their attempt to achieve world domination: wherever they went they destroyed, murdered, tortured and plundered. They reduced tens of thousands of towns to ruins. The memory of Oswiecim, Maidanek, Dachau, Mauthausen, Buchen-

wald, Ravensbrück, Treblinka and many other death camps–centres of the fascist "industry" for the destruction of human lives–will never be erased from the memory of the peoples. At the Maidanek camp alone, built on Polish territory, the fascists gassed and then burned nearly 600,000 people in furnaces. In Oswiecim the Nazis exterminated millions of people–citizens of the Soviet Union, Poland, France, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Holland, Belgium and other countries.

Many years have passed since the end of that bloodiest of wars. Yet its history, its results and impact on postwar developments in the world remain a question that is much discussed. People try to understand the causes of the war, the events that took place during the war and its lessons. Bourgeois historiography, as a rule, fails to define the political content and social role of the war and tries to evade the question of imperialism's responsibility for unleashing it. It is silent on the anti-Soviet trend of the prewar policy of the Western countries–the policy of "appeasement" whose essence was to encourage the fascist aggressors–and even tries to put the blame on the USSR for the outbreak of the war.

Reactionary bourgeois historians of the Second World War have constructed a theory of "decisive battles" designed to "prove" that the Armed Forces of the United States made the crucial contribution to victory over the aggressors. One of the authors of this theory, Hanson W. Baldwin, maintains that the outcome of the war was determined by eleven battles, and that only one of them–the Battle of Stalingrad–took place on the Soviet-German front. In the absolute majority of crucial battles victory is ascribed to Anglo-American troops, and victories on the Soviet-German front are given a secondary place.

In fact, many reactionary historians keep silent about the Battles of Moscow and Kursk and other battles which marked a turning point in the Second World War and determined its final outcome.

This book is a defence of historical truth: it gives a truthful account of some of the events of the Second World War. It also considers the results and lessons of the war and their close relationship with today's international situation.

Years that have passed since the end of the war is historically a short period. But tremendous changes have taken place in the world within that time. The rout of German and Italian fascism and Japanese militarism, and the Soviet Union's enormous contribution to the liberation of the world from the fascist plague promoted the victory of national-democratic and then socialist revolutions in a number of states of Europe and Asia, facilitated the growth of the national liberation movement in the colonial and dependent countries, and brought about the downfall of the colonial system of imperialism.

Socialism has become the most powerful and influential force of our time.

The struggle for peace, against the aggressive policies of imperialism, has since been unfolding in much more favourable conditions. Together with the Soviet Union, it is being conducted by the fraternal socialist countries and many developing nations, by all progressive mankind.

The success of the Soviet Peace Programme is due to the close interaction of the main revolutionary forces of our time and to the participation of the masses everywhere in the struggle for international security. A reliable barrier has been erected in the way of the aggressors.

However, the danger of a new world war remains. Since 1945 the world has witnessed more than 100 so-called local wars and armed conflicts unleashed by the imperialist powers and setting aflame many countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The arms race, spurred on by the United States, has reached an unprecedented scale. As was the case forty years ago, the confrontation between the forces of peace and the forces of war is once again the key factor determining the prospects of international development.

The lessons of the Second World War, the history of the tragedy and triumph of the freedom-loving nations are of special significance today. This is not only a tribute to the memory of the heroes who saved mankind from fascism; it is a powerful weapon in the fight for peace and social progress, against the threat of a global nuclear catastrophe.

Chapter I

BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS

Spurred on by anti-Sovietism

As is known, the Second World War was provoked by the following incident. A group of Nazi SS thugs dressed in the uniforms of Polish soldiers raided a German radio station in Gleiwitz on the German-Polish frontier and, speaking in the name of the Polish authorities, called for military actions against Germany. This was the provocation that Hitler and his commanders used as a pretext for attacking Poland.

The Second World War did not break out by accident. It was not due to some unforeseen turns of history, nor to the mistakes of certain statesmen, nor to a fateful concurrence of circumstances, as many bourgeois writers would have us believe.

History itself has clearly shown that the Second World War was unleashed by Hitler's clique, by the German monopolies that placed it in power, and by the German military. Ever since the 1920s they had been plotting to redivide the world and take revenge for Germany's defeat in the First World War. But one of the most important aspects of the Second World War is that it was prepared with the primary aim of destroying the world's first socialist state—the Soviet Union.

A period of twenty years divides the two world wars. And throughout these years, as testified by

facts, by thousands and thousands of documents, the imperialist powers had been dreaming of demolishing the Soviet state. This became clear immediately after the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. In 1918-20 the imperialist quarters made their first "global" attempt to wreck the Soviet state. The attempt was undertaken by 14 imperialist states headed by Britain, France, the United States and Japan, which sent nearly 700,000 troops to the Soviet land. With their support and enormous material aid the White Guard armies unleashed a bloody civil war in Russia. Both they and foreign invaders were defeated in the war; the victors were the working people of the young Soviet republic.

The entire period between the two world wars is marked by persistent attempts on the part of international imperialism to set up an anti-Soviet front with the aim of destroying the Soviet state. The leaders of the front were the imperialist circles of Britain, France and the United States, which counted on their main rivals–Germany, Japan and Italy, where fascist-militarist regimes were frenziedly fanning the flame of hostility towards the USSR and towards communism–to wage the war against the USSR. The two imperialist military blocs which gradually took shape fought between themselves for world domination and made intensive preparations for a new world war in which they intended to demolish the world's first socialist state.

Germany becomes a favourite

The monopolists of Britain, France and the United States regarded German militarism as a mighty force capable of combating the Soviet Union and, accordingly, did

their utmost to revive it after its defeat in the First World War.

It should be noted that the anti-Soviet attitudes of the German militarists were manifest long before Hitler came to power. In 1922 General Hoffmann together with the German industrialist Arnold Rechberg worked out a scheme of a joint campaign of three European powers–Germany, Britain and France–against Soviet Russia, and they emphasised the desirability of having the United States participate in it by providing financial and other means. It was these calculations that formed the basis of a plan devised in the early 1920s by the international monopolies under the direction of the US banker Charles Dawes. Under this plan, in the 1923-29 period alone Germany received about 4,000 million dollars' worth of foreign loans, more than half of the sum (2,500 million dollars) from the United States. This money enabled the German militarists not only to restore their war industry and furnish the German army with up-to-date equipment, but to nurture fascism as an instrument of the home and foreign policies of the German monopolies.

It is not surprising that at the Nuremberg trial of the main Nazi war criminals in 1946 the big German capitalist and head of the banking business in Nazi Germany, Hjalmar Schacht, told the American representative: "If you want to bring to trial the industrialists who armed Germany, you must try your own industrialists."

In 1933 the Nazis seized power in Germany. The speeches of their leader, Adolf Hitler, and his aides left no room for doubt as to their aims: to wipe out the Soviet state, crush the international working-class and national liberation movements, and kill all communists and other opponents of fascism. Towards

these ends a number of military-political alliances were formed in the 1930s, in which Nazi Germany now openly played the role of the striking arm of the anti-Soviet forces. The main alliance among them was the "Anti-Comintern Pact" concluded in 1936 in Berlin between Germany and Japan; Italy joined it in 1937, and some other countries and puppet governments followed suit a bit later. [1]

The anti-Soviet policy of the founders of the "Anti-Comintern Pact"–Germany and Japan–met with the support of the ruling circles of the United States, Britain and France.

A policy of encouraging the aggressor

The fascist aggressors acted quickly and arrogantly.

In 1935 Germany annexed Saar Territory, which had been under the administration of the League of Nations for 15 years. The coal-rich Saar region went from France to Germany, strengthening the latter's industrial base. France, Britain and the United States did not object when Germany unilaterally abrogated the clause in the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 on the limitation of the size of its army and the scope of its armament; after the abrogation it introduced universal military service. Nazi Germany built up a powerful army, navy and air force. Mesmerized by the anti-Soviet calls of the Nazi leaders the ruling circles of Britain, France and the United States thought that they could gratify the appetites of the fascist predators at the expense of the USSR.

[1] Towards 1939 the "Anti-Comintern Pact" was joined by Hungary and the puppet state of Manchoukuo, and then by Spain, Bulgaria, Finland, Romania, Denmark, and the puppet governments of Slovakia, Croatia and Nanking.

Even when in March 1936 German troops occupied Rhine Province, which was demilitarised under the Versailles peace treaty, the Western powers maintained silence. In occupying the Rhineland Hitler was taking a great risk; he was aware that this step, which threatened the security of France, might lead to armed resistance on its part, especially as the alignment of forces was not in Germany's favour. Yet the French government did not react.

Germany, Italy and Japan started a new redivision of the world with "small wars", which eventually led to the outbreak of the Second World War. In October 1935 the troops of fascist Italy invaded Ethiopia, whose soldiers were armed mostly with flintlocks and spears. By that time militarist Japan had embarked on a large-scale invasion of China. The German-Italian intervention against republican Spain began in 1936. Germany and Italy wanted to install a fascist regime there, thereby weakening the international democratic movement. Besides, they attached strategic importance to the Pyrenees peninsula in the event of a war against the Western powers.

The United States, Britain and France imposed an embargo on the export of arms and materiel to Spain. But military supplies from these states were reaching the Spanish fascists through third countries. In London a Committee for Non-Interference in the Affairs of Spain was set up, but it was not to carry out controlling functions and its inaction only encouraged the aggressors.

In March 1938 Germany occupied Austria under the false slogan of "Unification of lands inhabited by Germans". Before taking this step Hitler enlisted the support of the British government headed by

Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, an advocate of the policy of "appeasement" towards Germany.

The prewar policy of encouraging the aggressor culminated in the Munich agreement, which was signed in late September 1938 by Britain, France, Germany and Italy, and which gave away Czechoslovakia to the Hitlerites. The ruling circles of Britain and France betrayed Czechoslovakia in the hope that Nazi Germany would continue its aggression against the East and start a war against the USSR.

It should be noted that the United States played an active role in the Munich deal. On the night of September 26, 1938, US President Franklin Roosevelt sent a personal message to Hitler urging him to continue the talks so as to achieve a peaceful, just and constructive settlement of the disputed issues.

But the imperialist strategists miscalculated. The policy of "appeasement", as subsequent events were to show, only encouraged the Hitlerites, and whetted their appetites.

The Soviet Union was the only country to sharply condemn the Munich agreement, to come out in defence of Czechoslovakia and offer it military aid.

On returning to London after signing the shameful Munich agreement, British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain asserted that he had brought home peace for a whole generation. He was sadly mistaken. Winston Churchill, who soon succeeded him, believed the deal to be meaningless. He said that the governments of Great Britain and France had to choose between disgrace and war; they chose disgrace but would get war nonetheless.

The annexion of Saar Territory, the militarisation of Rhineland, the occupation of Austria and, finally,

the seizure of Czechoslovakia greatly strengthened Hitler Germany militarily. Huge quantities of military equipment were captured in Czechoslovakia. Addressing a meeting of his accomplices in April 1939 Hitler told them that in Czechoslovakia without a single shot he had "procured" 1,582 planes, more than 2,700 cannons, 735 mortars, 468 tanks, about 44,000 machine-guns, 114,000 submachine guns and over one million rifles. These weapons, as former Hitler generals have testified, fitted out ten Nazi divisions.

The Munich deal, too, made the Nazi leaders more confident that their aggressive acts would go unpunished, and thus speeded up the unleashing of the Second World War.

Today many bourgeois historians, in an attempt to justify the policy of "appeasing" Nazi Germany in the 1930s, harp on the argument that Britain, France and their allies were at the time militarily unprepared to rebuff Germany's aggressive acts. This argument does not hold water.

In the first place, Britain and France and their allies had in those years a decisive military superiority over Germany. Although the British and French press, for example, said that Germany threw a 260,000-strong army into the campaign to capture Rhine Province, in fact the invasion was carried out by a few battalions. The 47 divisions the Hitlerites had in the autumn of 1938, when the fate of Czechoslovakia was being decided, confronted 45 well armed and well trained Czechoslovak divisions backed by frontier fortifications that were first-rate by the standards of those days.

Secondly, Britain, France and the United States, banking on the anti-Soviet direction of Nazi aggres-

sion, had raised no objection whatever to the growth of Germany's armed forces. What is more, in 1935 an Anglo-German maritime agreement was concluded under which Britain undertook to restore Germany's navy to a strength practically equal to that of the French navy, and granted Germany the right to build submarines with an overall tonnage equal to 45 per cent of the British submarine fleet.

Thirdly, it was Germany's territorial annexations that led to a change in the alignment of forces in favour of Germany, to the swelling of its military potential.

The consequences were not long in coming. On March 15, 1939, Wehrmacht troops, in contravention of the Munich agreement, captured Prague and then the whole of Czechoslovakia; on April 7 Italy invaded Albania; Germany stepped up its war preparations against Poland–an ally of Britain and France. The political crisis in Europe aggravated sharply.

The USSR's stand

Under these circumstances, the USSR, which had been consistently opposing the fascist aggressions, made an important move aimed at preventing, through joint efforts, the outbreak of a war in Europe. In March 1939 the Soviet government entered into negotiations with the governments of Britain and France in order to work out joint measures against fascist aggression. The military talks held in Moscow on August 12, 1939, at the initiative of the Soviet government, were a continuation of the March negotiations. The Soviet military delegation, headed by the People's Commissar of Defence, Mar-

shal of the Soviet Union Kliment Voroshilov, was authorised not only to conduct the talks, but also to sign a military convention designed to prevent war in Europe. The Soviet side proposed three variants of joint actions involving the armed forces of Britain, France and the USSR in the event of aggression on the part of Nazi Germany.

But the governments of Britain and France, as the talks showed, did not aim to work out coordinated decisions. In the course of the talks it became clear that the Western delegations had not come to Moscow in order to prepare a joint rebuff to German aggression. The British delegation was not even authorised to sign any agreement. The talks reached a deadlock.

The Moscow talks exposed the double game which the ruling circles of Britain and France were playing. They had come to the talks to "explore" the strength and position of the USSR, and not to work out decisions to curb German aggression in Europe. It was not until the end of the Second World War that the whole double-dealing policy of Britain and France came to light. It became known that simultaneously with the Moscow talks the ruling circles of Britain were conducting secret negotiations with Hitler with the aim of concluding a "Pact of Four" (Britain, France, Germany and Italy) or, if that were not feasible (France and Italy took no active part in the negotiations), of forming an Anglo-German alliance. Britain made it clear that if a two-power deal could be struck she would end the talks with the USSR, abandon the defence of Poland and her other allies, and even sacrifice the interests of her closest and most powerful ally—France.

In August 1939 the Anglo-German talks became

particularly intensive. The details of the deal were to be worked out at a meeting between British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and Nazi Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering, whose trip to Britain in late August was approved by Hitler. The necessary precautions were taken. Goering's plane was to land at a secluded airport in Hartfordshire, where he was to be met by British government representatives in the strictest secrecy.

For the Soviet Union this presented a critical situation. In fact it was already in a state of war with Japan, which attacked the Mongolian People's Republic (which was friendly toward the Soviet Union) in the summer of 1939, and Soviet and Mongolian troops were fighting fierce battles with the invaders in the region of River Khalkhin-Gol. With Germany having completed its preparations for an attack on Poland, the Soviet Union was directly threatened. The plan of international imperialism to direct German and Japanese aggression against the Soviet Union, to strike at it from east and west, to sandwich it between two fronts, seemed to be nearing its realisation.

Faced with this extremely dangerous situation, the Soviet Union decided to conclude a non-aggression pact with Germany. It was signed on August 23, 1939. This forced step enabled the Soviet Union to win nearly two peaceful years in which to strengthen and improve its defences. The farsighted policy of the Soviet government foiled the attempts of the imperialist powers to draw the USSR into the war in 1939 and disorganised their anti-Soviet front. But after the disruption of the Moscow talks by Britain and France it was no longer possible to prevent a second world war.

Could Poland have been defended?

On September 1, 1939, Nazi Germany attacked Poland. Within 18 days the country was occupied by the Wehrmacht despite the heroic resistance of the Polish people. On September 16 the Polish government fled to Romania, abandoning the people and the country, which it had brought to a national catastrophe because of its anti-Soviet and pro-German policy.

Actually, in the first half of September 1939, Britain and France had a real possibility of inflicting on the Hitlerites a sufficiently hard blow to change the whole situation on the Polish-German front. This is explained by the alignment of forces prevailing at the time. At the beginning of the war Germany mobilised against Poland the bulk of its forces: 62 divisions, 2,800 tanks, and about 2,000 combat planes. This force was confronted by no more than 39 Polish divisions, about 400 combat planes and 870 tanks and tankettes. The situation on the western front was different. As of September 1 Germany had there only 31 divisions, 700 to 800 planes, and 300 cannons not counting divisional artillery; it had few tanks, if any. On the other hand, France alone had 90 divisions, about 2,000 tanks, more than 1,100 planes, and 1,600 pieces of artillery. In addition to this, the British Navy dominated the seas and the British Air Force had about 1,500 combat planes.

The very first days of the war showed that Britain and France never had any intention of giving Poland effective military support. The Polish high command itself became convinced of this on September 9, when it began talks with the Chief of the British Imperial General Staff, General William Edmund Ironside. In reply to the Polish request for immediate military aid General Ironside said that

operations on the continent were the affair of the French high command and advised Poland to purchase arms from neutral countries. When Poland was fighting a superior enemy alone Britain did not attack the Nazis from the west.

The French ruling circles acted in the same way. On September 10 the Chief of the General Staff, Maurice Gustave Gamelin, sent his message to the Polish government in reply to a request for aid: "More than half of our divisions in the northeast theatre of operations are engaged in battle." In actual fact on September 9-12 only nine French divisions were engaged in battle and, having advanced 25 kilometres in the front area without encountering any significant resistance on the part of the enemy (the fascist troops were instructed to refrain from fighting), stopped the offensive altogether. That was all the "military aid" that Poland got from its British and French allies.

How is this behaviour of the allies to be explained? The answer is that the Western powers continued to pursue their prewar policy which was aimed at plunging Germany and the USSR into a war with each other. This time they tried to have the Wehrmacht moved to the Soviet frontiers by sacrificing Poland. But the fascist aggressors had their own plans for securing world domination.

One more attempt by foul means

In its attempt to push Germany into a war with the USSR, in the autumn of 1939 the Anglo-French coalition itself began to make preparations for an attack on the Soviet Union. This is evidenced by secret documents of the state archives of Great Britain which were recently made

public. London, Paris and Washington tried to involve Hitler Germany in this act of aggression and to carry out in the new situation the old Munich idea of striking a deal with Nazi Germany at the expense of the USSR, to turn the "wrong" war of Nazi Germany against the West into a "right" war against the USSR.

It was planned to deliver two main blows to the USSR with the use of British and French troops—in the north and in the south. In the north, it was planned to provoke a Finno-Soviet military conflict and under the pretext of "aid to Finland" to strike at Leningrad, and in the south, under the cover of "aid to Turkey" to blast the Soviet oil-fields in the Caucasus. The Western governments thought that in such circumstances Nazi Germany (the main task force of whose troops was in Poland) would conclude peace with Britain and France and make its "natural move" to the East, that is, would strike at the central regions of the Soviet Union.

The mass media in Britain, France and the United States launched a frenzied anti-Soviet campaign. The press and radio used all the means at their disposal to make ideological preparations for a war against the USSR. The French journalist Henri de Kerillis wrote: "All we heard was: 'War on Russia!' Those who had been demanding complete immobility over the Maginot line were now begging for the army to be sent to fight in the North Pole... The anti-communist delirium reached its peak and assumed epileptic forms."

In early February 1940 US Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles was sent to Europe to establish direct contact with Mussolini, Hitler, Daladier and Chamberlain. According to an official announcement, this was to be a fact-finding mission, but it

was more than that. US government officials had been closely watching developments in Europe and came to the conclusion that the continent might be convulsed by social upheavals that would shake the very foundations of capitalism. This consideration determined the general approach of the Western countries to their negotiations with the Axis Powers. Welles had talks in Rome, Paris and London, and proposed that a quadrilateral armistice be concluded between the belligerents and that economic negotiations be started simultaneously without the participation of the USSR. In Berlin Welles made it clear that his trip to the four European capitals would be followed by an "official proposal" by the President of the United States. Welles's mission was thus a continuation of the earlier policy of "appeasement" toward the aggressors.

London and Paris approved of the US government's efforts to "achieve a just settlement of the European conflicts" and gave Welles to understand that if they were given certain guarantees they could reach a compromise with the Axis Powers. In Berlin Welles' mission was seen as yet another evidence of the weakness of the West and of the correctness of the course taken by Nazi Germany, namely, to attain its goals by force of arms.

Hostilities in Western Europe

For seven months after the Second World War began there were practically no combat operations on the western front. More often than not there were only skirmishes of patrols, notwithstanding the fact that the military-economic potential of the Anglo-French coalition at the time was superior to that of Germany. This came to be known as an "armchair" or "phony" war.

While giving the enemy a free hand in the west, Britain and France persistently urged it eastwards. The Hitler clique meanwhile took advantage of the inaction of the Anglo-French allies to prepare a strategic offensive on the western front.

On April 9, 1940 Nazi Germany attacked Denmark and Norway and quickly occupied the two countries. On May 10 it invaded France, Belgium, Holland and Luxemburg. Avoiding the Maginot line in the north, Hitler's troops rushed towards the La Manche coast and headed for Paris. British troops and French army units totalling about 340,000 men were pushed seaward near Dunkirk. Abandoning ammunition and equipment they evacuated to the British Isles. After the war some facts came to light indicating that Hitler gave an order not to hamper the evacuation; by this act of "leniency" the Hitlerites apparently hoped to win Britain over to their side and enlist her aid in the German attack on the USSR.

On June 14, 1940 Nazi troops captured Paris. It took the fascist-militarist bloc (Italy joined the war against Britain and France on June 10) a mere 40 days to rout the Anglo-French coalition and force France to capitulate.

By mid-1941 twelve European states had lost their independence because of actions committed by the German fascist aggressors. France was defeated. Here more developed industrial regions in the north were occupied by the Wehrmacht, and a puppet government completely dependent on Hitler's Reich was installed in Vichy in the south.

In preparing for its attack on the USSR Hitler Germany established control over the countries of southeast Europe. In October 1940 German troops entered Romania, where the fascist dictatorship of

General Ion Antonescu entrenched itself. The Nazis subjugated Hungary, dominated by the regime of the fascist dictator Miklós Horthy. In March 1941 the Hitlerites led their troops into Bulgaria and included it in their aggressive bloc. In April 1941 German and Italian forces occupied Yugoslavia and Greece. The Nazis saw to it that all the resources in the captured countries were used for an attack on the USSR.

The only non-belligerent states in capitalist Europe were Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Turkey. But most of them to various extent cooperated with Germany, supplying it, as in peacetime, with strategic raw materials, foodstuffs, and finished industrial goods.

Ever since the Napoleonic wars the political map of Europe had not been reshaped so quickly and drastically as during these first twenty months of the Second World War.

In 1940 the war started in Europe spread to Africa; there Nazi forces came to the help of the Italian colonialists, and planned to advance right to India.

Events in the Far East and the Pacific Ocean

The economic crisis of the late 1920s and early 1930s shook the whole capitalist world. The contradictions between the capitalist states became increasingly acute; they intensified their struggles for markets and spheres of influence, for a redivision of colonies, each striving for world domination. Taking advantage of the fact that the capitalist countries of Europe and the United States were busy with their domestic affairs, with the overcoming of the consequences of the recent

economic crisis, Japan began to seize other nations' territories; she occupied Manchuria and started intensive preparation for an attack on the USSR, and also on China and the countries of southeast Asia.

Hoping that the expansionist acts of Japan would lead to a major Soviet-Japanese conflict, the governments of the United States, Britain and France took no measures to restrain the aggressor.

By 1937 Japan had captured a large part of China, the cities Tientsin, Shanghai, Peking and the Chinese capital Nanking.

The US and British monopolies had been giving the aggressor all kinds of support. Japan had been importing from the United States huge quantities of oil, scrap iron and steel, machinery and equipment. In 1929 Japan received for the purpose of militarisation US and British credits totalling 100 million yen. In 1938 one of the top financial magnates of the United States, John Morgan, gave Japanese firms loans worth 75 million dollars, and other US banks lent them 50 million dollars. In July 1939 Britain concluded an agreement with Japan (the so-called Cragie-Arita agreement) under which she virtually pledged not to interfere in Japan's "Chinese affairs".

In providing diplomatic encouragement in the 1930s for Japanese aggression and in giving material and financial aid to Japan, Britain and the United States hoped to prompt Japan to start a full-scale war against the USSR. But it was against the United States, not the USSR, that Japan launched a "big war" in 1941. In 1948 a former US Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson, admitted in his book *On Active Service in Peace and War* that the war in the Pacific Ocean, which began in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, was a logical consequence of Japan's capture of Manchuria.

In the summer of 1941 the Japanese government began talks with the US government on the regulation of bilateral relations. In so doing Japan was seeking to blunt the vigilance of the United States and win time for preparing a blitzkrieg on US naval bases. The ruling circles of Japan had reason to believe that many US civilian and military leaders were counting on Japan's attacking the USSR and made no preparations for repulsing a possible Japanese attack on the United States.

The Japanese military thought at the time that the situation was less favourable for launching an attack against the USSR than for carrying out aggressive acts in the Pacific Ocean (the attempts to "probe" the USSR's combat readiness on Khasan Lake in 1938 and near the frontiers of the Mongolian People's Republic in 1939 cost the Japanese raiders dearly). The top military-political leadership of Japan planned first to capture the economic resources of the British, Dutch and US possessions in southeast Asia and the Pacific Ocean, and to attack the USSR when the latter would have become weakened in the war with Hitler Germany.

On the morning of December 7, 1941 Japanese planes, taking off from aircraft carriers, made a sudden massive strike on Pearl Harbor, a major US naval base in Hawaii. This was followed by a broad Japanese offensive in southeast Asia. Before May 1942 Japan had captured Malaysia, Burma, the Indonesian and Philippine islands, and the British naval bases in Singapore and Hong Kong. Japanese units occupied numerous islands belonging to the United States and Britain, invaded southwest China, and came near Australia and India.

By May 1942 Japan, without having incurred any significant losses, had captured a vast territory of

more than six million square kilometres and with a population of 400 million and an abundance of strategic reserves.

Speaking about the plans of the Japanese military the Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Navy, Gonnohyoe Yamamoto, said that for Japan Guam and the Philippines or even Hawaii and San Francisco were not enough, and that Japanese forces must enter Washington and sign a treaty in the White House.

The consequence of having encouraged the aggressor

The anti-Soviet course of the US and British ruling circles failed to bring them the desired results. The encouragement that Britain, the United States and France gave to the fascist aggressors in Europe and Asia in the hope that they would wage war on the USSR brought contrary results: Nazi Germany and militarist Japan first attacked those who had incited them to aggression. The contradictions between the imperialist countries themselves, and their desire to oust their capitalist competitors proved to be more powerful than those between the capitalist camp and the socialist country. The policy of giving the aggressor a free hand pursued in Europe and Asia by Britain, France and the United States boomeranged.

Thus, by its nature and origin the Second World War was a war between imperialist powers. But as the masses became increasingly involved in armed struggle against fascism, the war waged by the states opposing the Hitler bloc turned into a just one. This process of change in the nature of the war was completed with the entry of the Soviet Union in the war and the formation of an anti-fascist, anti-Hitler coalition.

Chapter II

ATTACK ON THE USSR

"Operation Barbarossa" At dawn on June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany, without having declared war, mounted an attack on the USSR. The USSR came under the assault of a five-million-strong invasion army, a might unprecedented in history: 190 divisions, more than 4,000 tanks, about 5,000 planes, over 47,000 guns and mortars, and more than 200 combatant and auxiliary ships. The first strategic echelon alone, counting allied troops (Finnish, Hungarian and Romanian), contained 157 divisions and 18 brigades.

The strategic plan code-named "Operation Barbarossa", worked out in the secret recesses of German headquarters, was being carried out. Under this name of a medieval German king–"the invader of other nations' lands"–was a plan of a blitzkrieg against the USSR. According to the Nazi generals and politicians, the blitzkrieg was to bring about the downfall of the Soviet Union within eight to ten weeks. After the capture of Poland and Norway, and the rout of France and other West European countries, the German political and military leadership concluded that a blitzkrieg was a universal and infallible means of attaining victory.

As noted earlier, German aggression against the Soviet Union was planned long before the war, back

in the mid-1930s. The war against Poland that had already begun, and then the campaigns in northern and western Europe diverted the attention of German Headquarters for a time. But the Hitlerites did not abandon preparations for a war against the USSR. Concrete and elaborate planning of the war was carried out by Supreme Headquarters of the Wehrmacht after the rout of France, when, in the opinion of the Nazi leadership, a logistical system for the future war had been assured and Germany possessed sufficient resources for waging it.

On December 18, 1940 Hitler signed Directive No. 21 under the secret name "Operation Barbarossa" (thought up by himself), which contained the general scheme and initial instructions for waging war against the USSR.

Germany enlisted the active participation of the reactionary rulers of Romania, Finland and Hungary in the aggression against the USSR. The Hitlerites also had the support of the reactionary clique of Bulgaria and of the puppet governments of Slovakia and Croatia. Spain, the Vichy government in France, Portugal and Turkey co-operated with Nazi Germany. And Germany had at its disposal the economic and manpower resources of the captured and occupied European countries and territories: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Luxemburg, Holland, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia, and Greece. In fact the whole economy of the captured countries and even that of the neutral states of Europe was working for Germany.

Thus in carrying out the "Barbarossa" plan Nazi Germany drew on the resources of nearly all the European states–those of its own allies as well as those of the occupied, dependent and neutral countries, whose population exceeded 300 million.

The Nazi plans to destroy the USSR

On the very first day of the war Hitler declared that the aim of the fascists was to pull down the Soviet state, abolish the socialist system and restore the power of the capitalists and landlords in the country. It was planned to exterminate part of the population, send able-bodied men and women to Germany to do hard labour, and transport industrial equipment, raw materials, agricultural produce, etc. out of the country.

The fascist clique meant to partition and eliminate the Soviet Union. On its territory it was planned to set up four *Reichskommissariats*–German provinces. Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and a number of other cities were to be blown up, deluged and wiped off from the surface of the earth.

"It is a struggle for destruction... In the East ruthlessness itself is a good thing for the future," the Fuhrer told a conference of his generals on March 30, 1941. The Nazi leadership called for the annihilation not only of Soviet soldiers, but of the Soviet civilian population as well. It wanted the physical destruction of the majority of Soviet people as the bearers of Marxist-Leninist ideology.

To carry out the plan of the mass extermination of Soviet people, a whole series of orders and instructions had been worked out long before the actual invasion of the USSR. There was a directive "On special jurisdiction in the 'Barbarossa' area"; there were special measures for troops, "Instructions on attitude towards Soviet prisoners of war", etc.

A directive signed on May 13, 1941 by the Chief of Staff of Supreme Headquarters of the Wehrmacht, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, relieved Wehrmacht soldiers and officers of all responsibility for any crimes they might commit on captured territory in

the USSR, and required of them to be pitiless towards Soviet citizens, to carry out mass repressions and shoot on the spot anybody who offered the least resistance or showed sympathy toward the partisans.

Soviet prisoners of war were to be treated with utter ruthlessness; it was ordered to build camps for them in the open air and enclose them with barbed wire only; to use prisoners on arduous and exhausting labours and keep them semi-starved; to shoot without warning anybody who attempted to escape.

"Instructions on the treatment of political commissars", issued on June 6, 1941, said that communists in the Soviet Army should be killed first of all. Wehrmacht officers and men were given this instruction: "Kill every Russian, every Soviet person; do not hesitate if it is an old man or a woman, a little girl or a little boy who stands before you. Kill, and by this act you will save yourself from death, provide for the future of your family and become famous for all time".

The Nazi invaders will for ever be known as oppressors, plunderers and murderers. Recently in the Byelorussian capital of Minsk a film was shown about one of the many thousands of crimes committed by the Hitlerites on Soviet soil. The picture is called *The Tragedy of Ola* and was made by amateur filmmakers who for a long time gathered documents and wrote down accounts of eyewitnesses who had lived through the reprisals perpetrated by fascist punitive forces against civilians in the village of Ola (Polessye region) and other villages. In Ola the Hitlerites burned alive 1,758 people, including 950 children. In the once large village only one hut was left, and

in it lives V. Ya. Dikun, a pensioner, who escaped death by a miracle.

The documents of the Nazi Reich show that the invaders intended to destroy the Russians as a nation, disunite them, partition the territory of the Soviet Union that was inhabited by Russians into different political districts each of which was to develop in isolation from the others. The fascists thought that extermination of the Russian working class, peasantry and intelligentsia would lead to the disintegration of the socialist family of peoples in the Soviet Union, remove all obstacles in the way of Germanisation of the peoples of the USSR and turn them into slaves of the Nazi Reich.

For the first time in history an invader state calculated beforehand with mathematical accuracy how many millions of people must be killed in Russia, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic republics; how many men and women must be subjected to forced sterilisation so as to eliminate the "biological potential" of the Soviet people; and how many children must be taken away from their parents and Germanised and turned into obedient slaves. On the maps prepared by the Nazis well in advance it was indicated which Soviet republics and which regions in these republics would go to Germany and become German provinces, and which ones the Fuhrer would give to his allies–to the actual ruler of Romania, General Ion Antonescu; the regent of Hungary, Admiral Miklós Horthy; and the dictator of Finland, Marshal Carl Mannerheim. The Nazi plans listed everything that was to be plundered in Soviet lands: factories and plants, oil, wheat, cattle, ancient icons, books, paintings, warm clothes, etc. The complete list included even stove soot and curative mud. Mobile gas-chambers and blind concrete

vaults for gassing people were built. The preparations were elaborate.

On the territory of the USSR the fascists razed more than 70,000 towns, villages and settlements, leaving 25 million people homeless. They blew up 31,850 industrial plants, 65,000 kilometres of railway, and 36,000 communications establishments. The invaders plundered and destroyed 96,000 collective farms, 1,376 state farms and 2,890 machine and tractor stations, bombed or ransacked 40,000 hospitals and other medical institutions, and 84,000 schools, technical secondary schools, higher educational establishments, and research institutes; they pillaged 427 museums and demolished 43,000 public libraries.

Twenty million Soviet citizens lost their lives.

Why did the fascist aggressors commit such unprecedented violence and atrocities? First of all it should be borne in mind that the war waged by Nazi Germany and its allies against the USSR had specific objectives.

The land of the Soviets was the chief obstacle on German imperialism's road to world domination. The Nazis waged a war against the USSR not only for the purpose of capturing its territory; they wanted to obliterate its social and political system. This is the basic difference between Nazi Germany's war against the USSR and the wars it was waging against the capitalist countries. Thus in the Nazi war against the USSR the fate of the world's first socialist country and, consequently, the ways of further development of human society had to be decided. This issue determined the nature of the war itself. The Soviet people from the start called their fight against Nazi Germany and its allies in aggression the Great Patriotic War.

The Soviet Union's war of liberation met with the support of working people all over the world. Meetings and demonstrations of solidarity with the Soviet people swept all continents immediately after June 22, 1941. The anti-fascist struggle of the peoples in countries enslaved by the fascist-militarist bloc gained momentum.

Hitler's prospects of world domination

The leadership of Nazi Germany was so confident that the "Barbarossa" plan would be successfully carried out that from approximately the spring of 1941 it set about elaborating plans for the conquest of the world. The entry for February 17, 1941 in the war diary of the Supreme Command of the Nazi Armed Forces took note of Hitler's order that "after the end of the Eastern campaign it is necessary to consider the capture of Afghanistan and the organisation of an offensive on India". Acting upon this order the Wehrmacht High Command began to plan future operations. They were to be conducted in the late autumn of 1941 and in the winter of 1941-42. The objective of these operations was outlined in Draft Directive No. 32, "Preparations for the period following the implementation of the 'Barbarossa' plan", which was sent to ground forces, the Air Force and Navy on June 11, 1941.

The draft directive said that after the rout of the Soviet Armed Forces the Wehrmacht should capture British colonial possessions and some independent countries in the Mediterranean basin, Africa and the Middle East, invade Britain and start hostilities against the United States.

According to the plans of Hitler's strategists, Germany was to proceed, already from the autumn of 1941, to the conquest of Iran, Iraq, Egypt, the Suez Canal area, and then India, where German forces were to join Japanese troops. The Nazi leadership hoped to draw Spain and Portugal into the war, capture Gibraltar swiftly, cut Britain off from its sources of raw materials, and embark on the siege of Britain itself.

Directive No. 32 and other documents testify that after the rout of the USSR and the solution of the "British problem" the Hitlerites intended, in alliance with Japan, to "do away with the influence of the Anglo-Saxons in North America".

The confidence of the Hitlerites in the feasibility of the Wehrmacht's achieving world domination was so great that as early as 1939 Hitler told Albert Speer, a young architect, that in the plan of the new Berlin, the capital of the Great German Empire, there should be a "Captured Arms Avenue". Objects captured by the Wehrmacht all over the world were to be put on display there. By the time the "Barbarossa" plan was to be carried out Germany had already conquered twelve European states. The others on the list were the Soviet Union, Britain, Iceland, Egypt, the Middle East countries, India, Afghanistan, and finally the United States.

The plan for the conquest of Canada and the United States of America called for the landing of large amphibious forces from bases in Greenland, Iceland, Azores and Brazil on the east coast of North America, and from Aleutian and Hawaiian Islands on the west coast.

In April-June 1941 all these questions were repeatedly discussed by Hitler and his aides and at Supreme Headquarters of the German Armed Forces.

Hitler's generals believed that the key positions for carrying out the conquest would be provided by the campaign against the USSR.

The first months of the war

The powerful strike of Hitler's war machine at Soviet troops was a sudden one. Not having completed strategic deployment, Red Army units were dispersed along a front 4,500 kilometres long and more than 400 kilometres deep inside the country. In the line of its main attacks the enemy had a force many times stronger. Its chief strategic targets were Leningrad, Moscow, the central industrial region and the Donets basin. Moscow was a special target. Its capture, like that of Paris, Copenhagen and other European capitals, was believed to be crucial for the whole course of the war.

As they moved across Soviet territory the Hitlerites perpetrated atrocious crimes: they shot down women, old men and children, shot and killed Soviet soldiers wounded in the field of battle, ruthlessly tortured prisoners, burned down towns and villages, plundered and committed other outrages.

However, neither the enemy's superiority in forces in the main attack directions nor its terror actions could break the will of the Soviet people. In the course of fighting Soviet soldiers, officers and generals gained experience of modern warfare, which the Hitlerites had already acquired during their campaigns in the West.

In the summer and autumn of 1941 regular Red Army units while retreating put up stiff resistance and, launching fierce counterattacks, inflicted heavy losses on the invaders. For example, for about three

weeks the defenders of the Brest Fortress held out in its casemates; the enemy failed to force them out of there or burn them with flame throwers.

Cut by tank thrusts of panzer divisions under command of Ewald von Kleist, Heinz Guderian, Hermann Goth and Erich Hoepner, and harassed by thousands of aerial bombs, the Soviet corps and divisions fought on, inflicting considerable losses on the enemy.

Towards the end of the third month of the war the Chief of the General Staff of Germany's land forces, Col.-Gen. Franz Halder, recorded the following: "Wounded: 12,604 officers, 385,326 non-commissioned officers and men; killed: 4,864 officers, 108,487 non-commissioned officers and men; missing: 416 officers, 23,273 non-commissioned officers and men. Total losses: 17,884 officers, 517,086 non-commissioned officers and men. Total losses for the whole army on the Eastern front (not counting the sick): 534,970 officers and men, or approximately 15 per cent of all land forces on the Eastern front."

Partisan attacks

The ground literally burned under the feet of the fascists. In occupied territories there was a widespread partisan movement, organised at the call of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. The fight against the Hitlerites became truly a people's war there.

Thousands of partisans were fighting in Byelorussia, the Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Moldavia. Towards the end of 1941 more than 3,500 partisan detachments numbering over 90,000 men were operating in occupied territory. In 1942 the figure went up considerably. In areas liberated from the

invaders partisan zones with bodies of Soviet power, and even "partisan woodland republics" were set up. One such "republic" existed in the Pskov and Novgorod forests, in northwest Russia. Four hundred villages in the enemy rear reintroduced the Soviet regime which functioned according to the laws of the Soviet state, having ousted the fascist administration. They put out their own newspapers and held Communist Party and Komsomol meetings.

Underground Party organisations in occupied areas conducted political work among the people and issued newspapers and leaflets which carried truthful accounts about the situation at the front. They instilled in people confidence that the enemy would be defeated, that the Soviet people would come out victorious.

In 1942 the Central Headquarters of the partisan movement was set up in Moscow, and in enemy-occupied territories there appeared local headquarters which coordinated partisan actions against the occupation forces and supported the Red Army in its combat operations.

Everything for the front, everything for victory!

In the very first months of hostilities the fascists captured the key industrial regions of the country. They had control over an area which was inhabited by 40.5 per cent of the Soviet Union's population before the war, and which produced 68 per cent of the cast iron, 58 per cent of the steel and 63 per cent of the coal.

But neither the Donets coal fields nor the iron-and-steel works in the south of the European part of the USSR could be used by the Nazis, and not only because people everywhere refused to work for them,

but mainly because from the areas threatened by Nazi occupation more than 1,500 industrial plants and factories, including 1,360 major ones, were evacuated in the summer and autumn of 1941 to the Urals, Siberia and Soviet Central Asia. Together with them all personnel and their families were evacuated. The eastern regions of the USSR, where an enormous coal and metallurgical base was built way back in the first five-year plan periods, became the arsenal of the Red Army. At the same time the construction of new plants and factories was started. In the first three years of the war 2,250 large industrial enterprises went into operation in the eastern regions.

The slogan "Everything for the front, everything for victory over the enemy!" became a law of life for Soviet people in those grim years. In the very first days of the war, when millions of workers in the cities went to the front, their mothers and wives, sisters and children took their place in the factories. Retired workers went back to the bench. Young people initiated a movement under the motto: "Let each of us fulfil his own quota, and a second quota for his comrade who has gone to the front." In rural areas millions of collective farmers and workers at state farms and machine-and-tractor stations enlisted; the bulk of agricultural work was done by women, old men and children.

The tremendous amount of organisational work carried out by the Communist Party and the Soviet government both behind the enemy lines and at the front enabled the Soviet people not only to overcome the tragic consequences of Nazi Germany's sudden attack, but also to change the balance of forces in a gigantic battle.

The historic landmarks on the Red Army's road to victory were the Battles of Moscow, Stalingrad and Kursk, and the Byelorussian and other strategic operations.

The Battle of Moscow

The offensive on Moscow was led by the Nazi Army Group "Centre". With their overwhelming superiority in personnel and materiel, the enemy armies reached the approaches to the Soviet capital in October 1941. But after that they could not make a single step forward despite hysterical orders from Berlin. By that time their colossal might concentrated in the blitzkrieg had been undermined by the unparalleled struggle waged by the Red Army and the partisans along the entire front and in all occupied territories since the first day of the Nazi attack on the USSR.

Hitler ordered his generals to take Moscow at any price. The main forces of the German army were brought up for the operation. Into the offensive on Moscow, code-named "Typhoon" at Hitler's General Headquarters, the enemy flung about two million men and officers, 1,700 tanks and assault guns, more than 14,000 pieces of ordnance and mortars, and about 1,400 planes.

According to the testimony of Nazi generals, Hitler told a conference at the headquarters of Army Group "Centre", which mounted the offensive on the Soviet capital: "The city must be encircled in such a way that not a single Russian soldier, not a single inhabitant–man, woman or child–can leave it. Any attempt to escape must be stopped by force."

At the cost of enormous losses, the Hitlerites, owing to their superiority in strength, managed to

penetrate the far approaches to Moscow. In Berlin they were already printing cards of invitation to the parade to be held in Red Square in celebration of the capture of Moscow. But towards the end of October the offensive got bogged down, which made Hitler's army despondent. The Red Army was not only putting up a stubborn resistance, but also delivering telling counterblows.

On December 5 Soviet troops launched a powerful counteroffensive and drove the enemy out of the environs of Moscow. In fierce fighting they forced the enemy to retreat and, in some sectors of the front, to flee in panic. As they retreated the Hitlerites abandoned their weapons and other materiel, as well as thousands of their dead and wounded men and officers.

On December 8, 1941 Hitler issued Directive No. 39 ordering the German Armed Forces to assume the defensive on the whole length of the Soviet-German front. Hitler gave as the main reason for issuing the order the "early and cold winter on the Eastern front and the difficulties it caused in the delivery of supplies".

Of course the reason was not the cold weather, although the Hitlerites did intend to complete the blitzkrieg before winter set in. The real reason why the blitzkrieg failed was that the Nazi political and military high command had underestimated the strength of the Soviet socio-political system and the might of its military organisation.

The attacks of the Soviet forces prevented the enemy from forming defensive lines, and in spite of the ruthless orders of their commanders Nazi troops were compelled to give up one position after another in the course of the fighting. Before the Hitlerites loomed the fate of Napoleon and his troops and the

dismal picture of their winter retreat from Russia in 1812.

The Soviet counteroffensive freed 11,000 populated areas.

That was the end of operation "Typhoon". The plans for a victorious military campaign on the East and the capture of Moscow had collapsed.

By early March 1942 the total losses of the German land forces (the Wehrmacht's main power) at the Soviet-German front exceeded, according to German sources, one million men, including 716,000 in Armies Group "Centre", which led the advance on Moscow. The defeat near Moscow was the first one suffered by the Nazi forces since the beginning of the Second World War.

The Battle of Moscow destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the Wehrmacht.

It also brought about a radical turn in the Second World War and had an enormous influence on the whole of its subsequent development. The defeat of the Hitlerites showed the world that the Soviet Union was capable of crushing the fascist aggressors, and this helped to broaden and intensify the anti-fascist struggle and the resistance in the Nazi-enslaved countries of Western Europe.

The forming of an anti-fascist coalition

In attacking the USSR the Nazis thought that they would be able to isolate it in the international arena and organise a crusade against it. The prewar policy of the Western powers led them to think so. But Hitler and his clique miscalculated. The ruling circles of the United States and Britain were compelled to form a coalition with the USSR. They

realised that their forces would not be able to rout the fascists, who had captured vast territories in Europe and Africa by mid-1941. A direct threat hovered over Britain; the course of war operations showed that she was incapable of holding out against Germany on her own, that at any moment she might be attacked and occupied by Wehrmacht troops.

Soon after Nazi Germany's assault on the Soviet Union, the government of Britain and then that of the United States announced that they would be on the Soviet side. After that Soviet-Czechoslovak and Soviet-Polish agreements on rendering mutual help in war were signed. On September 27, 1941 the Soviet government issued a statement saying that the USSR would give the French people all-round assistance in their struggle against the occupiers. That was how an anti-fascist coalition of freedom-loving nations came to be formed; it took final shape after the Battle of Moscow.

On January 1, 1942 twenty-six states, including the USSR, the United States and Britain, met in Washington and signed the Declaration of the United Nations, in which they pledged to use their resources to fight the aggressors, to co-operate in the war effort, and not to conclude a separate peace.

It should be noted that although the coalition made a valuable contribution to the achievement of victory over the fascist bloc, its members were deeply divided as regards the aims of the war and the postwar structure of the world.

The Soviet Union maintained that the aim of the war was to rout fascism, liberate the fascist-enslaved nations and create conditions for a lasting peace. The ruling circles of the United States and Britain considered that the main objective was to defeat Germany and Japan–their main rivals–and to estab-

lish their own domination. At the same time reactionary circles in the United States and Britain were striving to preserve Germany and Japan as a military force for struggle against the Soviet Union. The intention of these circles was quite clearly stated by US Senator Harry Truman (subsequently President of the United States) on the day following the attack on the Soviet Union. He declared that if Germany was winning, the United States should help Russia, and if Russia was winning, it should help Germany; the idea was to have Russia and Germany destroy each other. To make his statement seem less odious, he added that he did not want Hitler to be victorious under any circumstances.

These differences as regards the aims of the war naturally affected the interaction of the Allies. While the Soviet Union was strictly and punctually fulfilling all its commitments, the United States and Britain often violated theirs in the hope that the Soviet Union and Germany would exhaust their fighting power. Nevertheless the formation of the anti-fascist coalition signified a major victory for all the world forces fighting against fascism, for peace and democracy.

The fighting in Africa

The Battle of Moscow affected the situation in Africa, since the Nazis could not send fresh forces to North Africa. In November 1941 British forces mounted an offensive and ended the siege of Tobruk. Soon afterwards the territory of Cyrenaica was liberated. But the fascists, taking advantage of the dispersal of British troops, launched an offensive in early 1942 and recaptured Cyrenaica. The British had to retreat to Egypt. At a defensive position near

El Alamein (a hundred kilometres west of Alexandria) the fascist advance towards the Suez Canal was stopped. Thus the situation in North Africa was stabilised for some time.

When they were preparing for a major offensive on the Soviet-German front in the summer of 1942 the Hitlerites were compelled to divert part of their forces from Western Europe and Africa. This enabled the British Command, headed by General Montgomery, to mobilise reserves and launch a successful offensive in October 1942. The enemy left Egypt.

The Battle of Stalingrad From the beginning of 1942 Soviet armies launched increasingly powerful attacks on the fascist hordes. Since the enemy was still strong, it would have been easier to defeat them if the Allied armies carried out joint operations. But although the governments of the United States and Britain had acclaimed the formation of this coalition and promised to open a second front in 1942, they were not in a hurry to fulfil their Allied obligations. This gave Hitler the opportunity, after the German defeat near Moscow, to dispatch 25 divisions from the Western to the Eastern front, to build up a force of more than six million men through a total mobilisation, and mount a broad offensive on the Soviet-German front in the summer of 1942.

The main thrust of the fascists was directed toward the southeast, toward the area between the Volga and the Don, and toward the Caucasus. Most of the fighting in 1942 took place on the banks of the great Volga in the Stalingrad area, to which Hitler in the summer sent more than a million men and officers, over a thousand planes and 700 tanks.

The enemy's capture of the Stalingrad area presented a serious danger because it led to the loss of communications linking the country's central regions with the Caucasus, along which oil from Baku was transported for military and economic needs.

The enemy was superior in strength. And to the enemy's advantage the Soviet forces had an acute shortage of anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery, and some units lacked ammunition. In spite of this the Red Army men put up a vigorous fight and engaged the Hitlerites in protracted, stubborn battles. Suffering tremendous losses the Hitlerites managed to break through to the Volga on August 23.

The Battle of Stalingrad took place in an area of 100,000 square kilometres and continued for 200 days and nights (from July 17, 1942 to February 2, 1943). The front line was from 400 to 850 kilometres long. At certain stages the two sides threw into the battle more than two million men, and over 2,000 tanks, 2,000 planes, and 26,000 pieces of ordnance and mortars. The defenders of Stalingrad displayed unparalleled endurance, fortitude and audacity. There was fierce fighting for every neighbourhood, every street, every house.

On November 19, 1942 Soviet forces operating in the Stalingrad area, having exhausted the enemy and bled them white in many months of defensive battles, mounted an offensive. The large-scale attack ended with the encirclement of 22 fascist divisions totalling more than 330,000 men and officers. In February 1943 these troops surrendered after fierce fighting; more than 91,000 Hitlerites were taken prisoner.

A few years ago the author of this book had an opportunity to talk with Marshal of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevsky, who in the period of the Battle

of Stalingrad was Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army and as a representative of General Headquarters of the Supreme Command was in direct charge of frontal operations in the Battle of Stalingrad.

He told of two memorable days in the heroic epic which, he emphasised, were related to each other. "The first day is August 23, 1942. The enemy's fierce air raids set the whole city ablaze. It was difficult in that situation to remain calm and maintain one's balance. We were all aware that the fall of Stalingrad would mean a deadly threat to the country. Military units and anti-aircraft and other artillery available in the city were sent to its northern outskirts. Appeals to the population were made. That was the most strenuous day. The Soviet forces held out. The Stalingraders held out.

"The second unforgettable day is November 23, three months after the fascists broke through to the Volga. That day troops of the southwest and Stalingrad fronts linked up near the Sovetsky village and closed the encirclement ring around all enemy groupings. It was a day of great joy for us. Over the scorched steppes came the dawn of victory."

The losses of the Nazi army in the Battle of Stalingrad during the Soviet offensive from November 19, 1942 to February 2, 1943 totalled more than 800,000 men, about 2,000 tanks and assault guns, more than 10,000 artillery pieces and mortars, about 3,000 combat and transport aircraft, and over 7,000 motor vehicles; the Wehrmacht lost 32 full divisions and three brigades, and 16 other divisions lost 50 to 75 per cent of their personnel. The Romanian and Italian armies were routed. In the battles on the banks of the Volga and on the foothills of the Caucasus the enemy lost about 1.5 million men.

In the Battle of Stalingrad the fascists suffered their greatest defeat since the beginning of the Second World War. A three-day mourning was declared in Germany.

The victory won by the Red Army on the banks of the Volga marked a turning point in the Second World War. The strategic initiative passed once and for all into the hands of the Red Army and its Supreme High Command. The whole edifice of the fascist bloc was shaken. The resistance movement gained momentum in France, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries captured by the Hitlerites. Partisan units in Yugoslavia stepped up their combat operations. Relations between the fascist-bloc countries became strained. The defeat of the Hitlerites near Moscow and their rout near Stalingrad led Japan and Turkey to decide against entering into war with the USSR.

Fiasco of Operation "Citadel"

In early 1943 Soviet forces took the offensive along the entire 1,000-kilometre front stretching from the Caucasus to Leningrad. There began a massive effort to drive the enemy out of Soviet land.

The ruling circles of Nazi Germany realised that the outcome of the operations on the Soviet-German front would determine the results of the world war and the fate of Germany itself. That is why Hitler decided to undertake in the summer of 1943 a "general offensive", which the German General Headquarters thought would be the turning point of the war, the last decisive battle at the Soviet-German front. The Wehrmacht Command's Operation Order No. 6 on preparations for the offensive near Kursk

emphasised that every commander and every private must be aware of the crucial importance of that offensive; victory at Kursk should be a torch for the whole world. The order called for the use in the offensive at the Kursk Bulge of the best formations, the best weapons, the best commanders, and the largest possible amount of ammunition. The former Chief of Staff of the Wehrmacht's 48th Tank Corps, Friedrich Mellenthin, later admitted that no other offensive was so thoroughly prepared as this one.

For the offensive operation code-named "Citadel" the Wehrmacht Command concentrated tremendous forces in the Kursk area: 50 crack divisions, about one million men, some 10,000 pieces and mortars, more than 2,000 planes and about 2,700 tanks. Nearly all the new *Panther* and *Tiger* tanks and self-propelled *Ferdinand* guns with specially thick armour, that had been produced by Germany by July 1943, were sent to the Kursk theatre of operations. Such a concentration of strength in one battle was unknown in the history of warfare.

On July 5 the Nazis mounted the offensive. The Soviet Supreme Command was expecting it and had made the necessary preparations for its repulsion. After the enemy advance had been stopped in defensive battles, the Soviet forces launched a decisive offensive themselves. The famous tank battle which took place near Prokhorovka on July 12 involved more than 1,200 tanks and self-propelled pieces of ordnance; this gives an idea of the fierceness of the fighting. Eyewitnesses say that the ground trembled from the clanging of caterpillar tracks and the thunderous blasts of heavy artillery and air bombardments, and over the black scorched steppes hovered the thick flame of shots and explo-

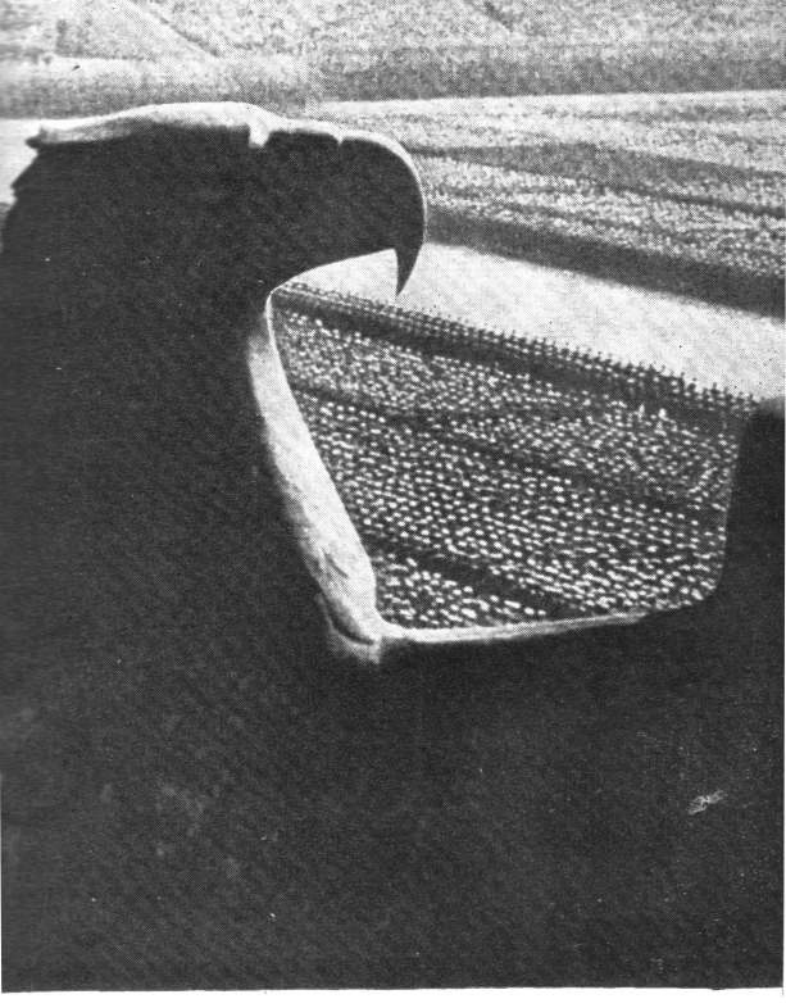
sions while pillars of smoke rose from burning tanks. Smoke and fumes over the battlefield soared three to four kilometres above the ground. The smell of burning hot metal and exhaust gases reached areas miles away. In one day of the battle Hitler's forces lost more than 350 tanks and more than 10,000 men and officers.

The fierce battles in the north and south of Kursk lasted about 50 days. Throughout this time the enemy committed about 100 divisions to action. About 30 of Hitler's divisions were routed. The enemy lost nearly half a million men, about 1,500 tanks, 3,000 artillery pieces and more than 3,700 planes.

"If the Battle of Stalingrad presaged the decline of the German fascist army," said the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, Joseph Stalin, "the Battle of Kursk brought it to the brink of disaster."

The Battle of Moscow had destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the German army. The Battle of Stalingrad had shaken the foundation of Hitler's war machine for after it the Nazi Command lost the strategic initiative and never recovered it. And the Battle of Kursk signalled the fiasco of both the offensive and defensive strategies of the Nazi army, and changed the course of the war in favour of the Soviet Union. The Red Army had learned how to strike the enemy effectively, with due regard for their weak and strong points, as required by modern military science. Millions of Red Army men had become seasoned fighters. The Battle of Kursk testified to the tremendous growth of the Red Army's strength and combat skill, to the superior strategic leadership of the Soviet Supreme Command.

The victories at Kursk, Oryol and Belgorod marked the first stages of the Soviet Supreme Command's general plan for the summer-autumn campaign of



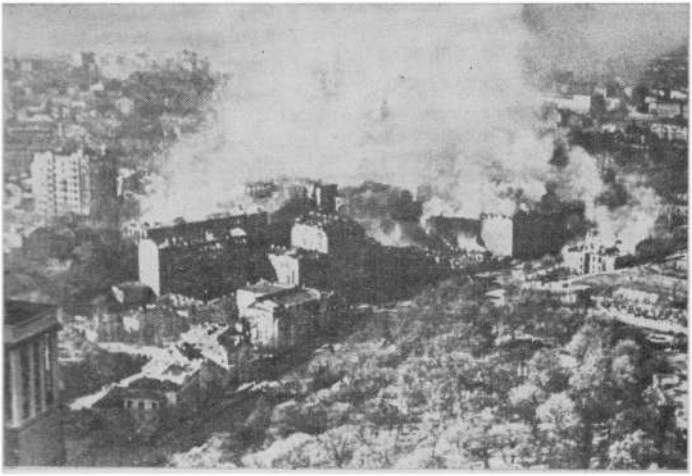
The threat of fascism hung over the world.

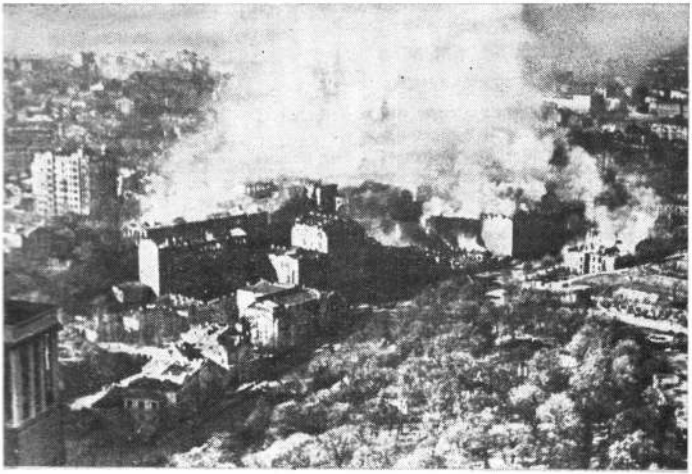
VERVIR

Hitler's Wehrmacht captured 12 European countries.

Fifteen minutes before the attack on the Soviet Union. The Commander of the Nazi Tank Group, General Guderian (third from left), with his officers in the Brest area near the Soviet frontier.

June 22, 1941. The first hours after the Germany's attack. Kiev and Krivoy Rog (below).



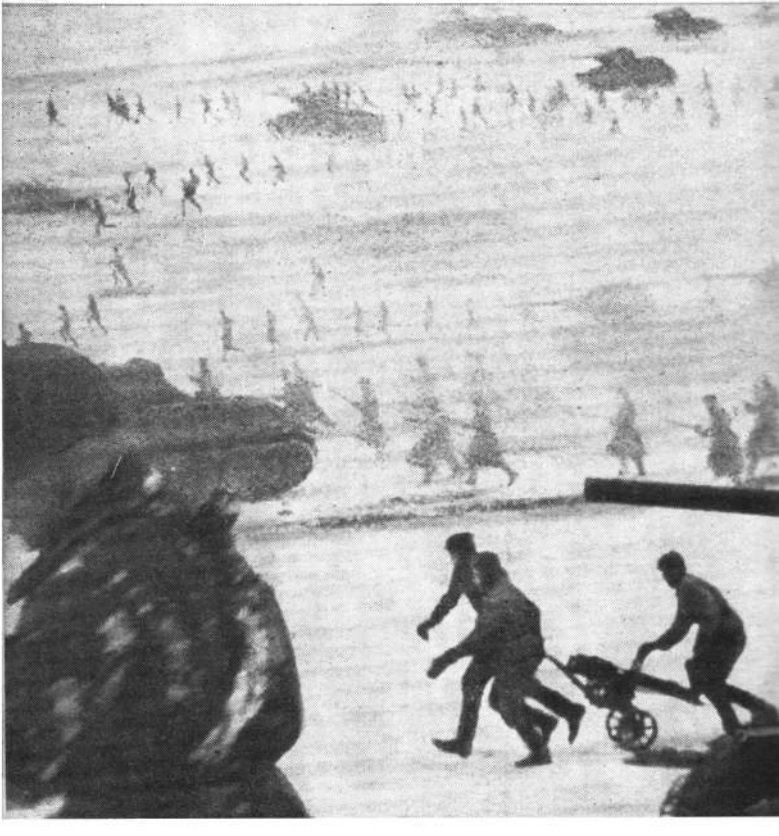


Soviet anti-aircraft gunners.

People living in the vicinity of Moscow helped the Red Army to build a defence line on the approaches to the capital.

November 7, 1941: the traditional parade on Red Square while the Nazis were approaching Moscow.

Behind the enemy lines.



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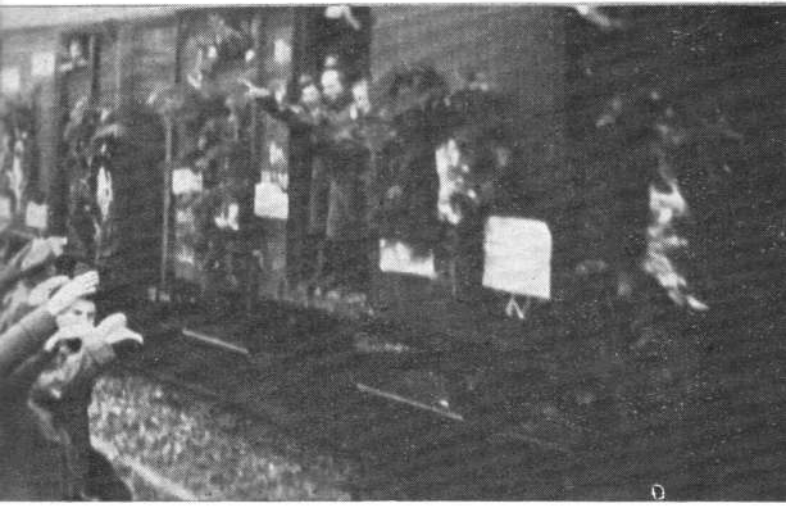
The banner of victory over the Nazi Reichstag.

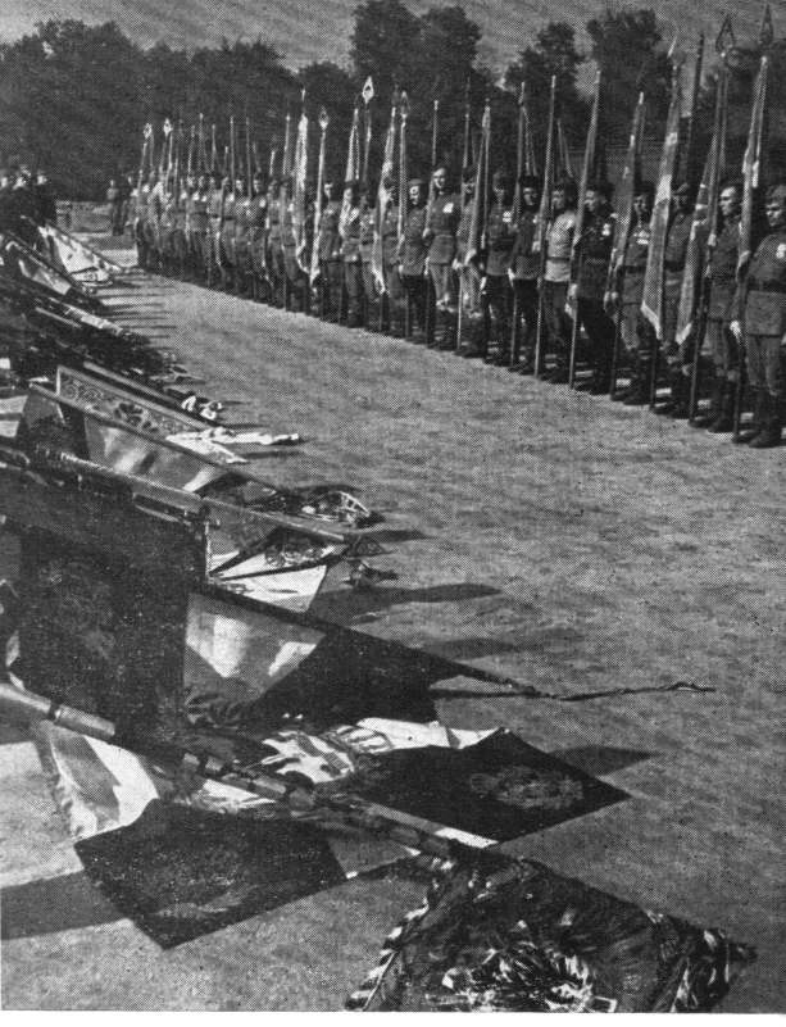
The first peaceful days in Berlin.

April 1945. Soviet and US soldiers meet on the Elbe.

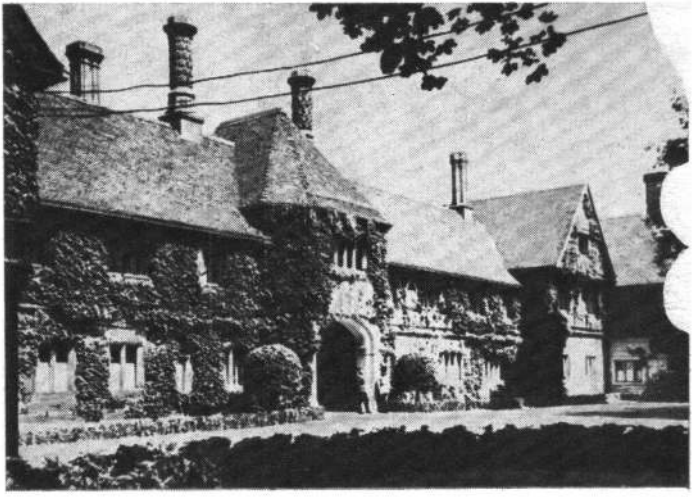


The Soviet army saved these people from fascist slavery. Returning home after victory.

Karlshorst. May 9, 1945.
Signing of the Act of
Unconditional Capitulation by
Nazi Germany.



Hitler's eagles and standards demolished.



The Potsdam Conference was held in this palace.

Signing of the Act of Unconditional Capitulation by Japan [aboard the battleship "Missouri", September 2, 1945].

1943. This plan set before the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union the task of routing and hurling back during summer and autumn enemy troops beyond the line Smolensk–Sozh River–middle and lower Dnieper, forcing the Dnieper and, after building bridgeheads on the western bank of the river, proceeding to liberate Right-Bank Ukraine.

After the Battle of Kursk the Red Army's summer offensive developed on a 2,000-kilometre front.

Marshal of the Soviet Union Kirill Moskalenko, a participant in the actions at Kursk, writes in his book *The Southwestern Zone:*

"All progressive mankind, including the peoples of the Western countries–our allies in the anti-Hitler coalition–rejoiced at the Red Army's victories. Recalling those times, I must, unfortunately, mention some other views which were expressed then too. For example, some press organs of our Allies tried to minimise the heroic feats of the Red Army. Probably this was due to the fact that the armies of the other members of the anti-Hitler coalition had by that time made no significant contribution to the common victory over fascism, and thus it was rumoured in the press that the Nazi Command was moving its troops from the Soviet-German front to the West. According to this view troops were transported from areas where they had suffered defeat to places where they would be out of danger.

"This is the logic of falsifiers. The war reports published in leading British and US newspapers were untrue. The Nazi Command was indeed carrying out a redisposition of its forces–not from East to West, but in the opposite direction. In its publications of January 31 and February 15, 1943, the Soviet Information Bureau said that thirty-one German

divisions had been moved to the Soviet-German front since late November 1942.

"It would not be worthwhile recalling all this were it not for the fact that even in the postwar days it was alleged that in the said period Nazi troops were moved from the Eastern front to the West. Such allegations, needless to say, were aimed at proving that the United States and Britain played the leading role in the Second World War."

In actual fact the Battle of Kursk did not permit the Wehrmacht Command to move its forces from the Eastern front to the theatre of operations in Italy, where troops of the Western Allies landed on July 10; they landed in the island of Sicily and, having captured it, ferried to the Apennines peninsula.

One can also form a true picture of the situation from international developments following the Battle of Kursk.

After the rout of the Nazi army at Kursk the crisis within the Hitler bloc became aggravated. The political crisis in Italy worsened. Carl Mannerheim refused to accept the post of Commander-in-Chief of Finnish and German forces in Finland. The Spanish dictator, Francisco Franco, considered it necessary to pull his battered "Blue Division" out of the environs of Leningrad. The leader of the Hungarian fascists, Miklós Horthy, stepped up his attempts to reach agreement with Britain and the United States on Hungary's withdrawing from Germany's side in the war. The Nazi defeat at Kursk made the rulers of Romania and Bulgaria very anxious. When the Hitler Command began to move its troops from the southern wing of the Soviet-German front to the Kursk zone, General Ion Antonescu of Romania and the Bulgarian Tsar Boris declared that a weakening of German positions in the Black Sea area would

have "perilous consequences" for their countries. The Nazi Command was compelled to give up its offensive strategy and assume a defensive one on the whole length of the Soviet-German front. It became clear to the whole world that the rout of Nazi Germany was only a matter of time.

The Teheran Conference

In late 1943 the heads of government of three of the Allied Powers–Joseph Stalin of the USSR, Franklin Roosevelt of the United States and Winston Churchill of Great Britain–met for the first time in the war years, in Teheran, the Iranian capital. Preliminary agreement was reached between them on a number of important issues concerning the joint conduct of the war and the postwar structure of the world.

The participants in the conference discussed and adopted major decisions connected with the rout of Nazi Germany and postwar co-operation among the Allies. On the question of opening a second front Churchill rejected the plan to invade Europe through the English Channel and tried to push through his own plan of entering Europe through the Balkans. Britain's motive here was not to bring nearer victory over fascism, but to penetrate the Balkan states and place them under Britain's influence. The Soviet delegation sharply criticised Churchill's plan.

It was finally decided at the conference to open a second front in Europe in May 1944, the invasion was to be carried out through the English Channel. After the conference, however, Churchill and his supporters continued to delay the opening of a second front and tried instead to capture the Balkans.

On the question of the postwar order in Germany

the representatives of the United States and Britain proposed dividing Germany into several states. This idea was dropped owing to the objection of the Soviet delegation. The declaration on Iran mentioned the rendering of aid to the people of that country during and after the war. The conference also discussed Poland. The US delegation wanted the Soviet Union to establish diplomatic relations with Polish anti-communist government in exile in London, but the Soviet delegation turned down the idea.

In spite of all the differences, the Teheran conference demonstrated the feasibility of settling controversial issues between the Allies and confirmed the desire of the three great powers to rout the Nazi aggressors.

Victory in the Battle of Leningrad

As early as the summer of 1941 Nazi troops reached the nearest approaches to Leningrad, but failed to capture it. The defenders of Leningrad withstood a grim and arduous 900-day siege of their city–the cradle of the October Socialist Revolution. The Hitlerites intended to starve the defenders and inhabitants of the city into surrender, but the Leningraders were ready to fight. The hunger blockade of 1941-42 caused the death of several hundred thousand people. Leningrad's human losses incurred during the blockade are greater than those of the United States in the Second World War.

The defence of Leningrad is a story of super-human efforts to save the Leningraders, undertaken by the leaders of the Soviet state, by the commanders and soldiers of the Leningrad front, by all Soviet people. The evacuation of the population began soon

after the war broke out. Nearly 1,750,000 people were evacuated in an organised manner. This is the only case in history where such a large number of residents were evacuated from a city under siege and prolonged blockade.

As soon as the rout of Hitlerite forces at Stalingrad created the prerequisites for offensive actions in other sectors of the Soviet-German front, an offensive was mounted (in January 1943) by Soviet troops at the Volkhov and Leningrad fronts in the Lake Ladoga area. The offensive resulted in the breaking of the blockade of Leningrad. Within 18 days a 50-km-long railway and a temporary ferroconcrete bridge across the Neva were built, which considerably increased the flow of supplies of food and fuel into the city.

The world was struck by the endurance and courage of the defenders of Leningrad. US President Roosevelt sent the city this message: "In the name of the people of the United States of America, I present this scroll to the City of Leningrad as a memorial to its gallant soldiers and to its loyal men, women and children who, isolated from the rest of their nation by the invader and despite constant bombardment and untold sufferings from cold, hunger and sickness, successfully defended their beloved city throughout the critical period from September 8, 1941 to January 18, 1943, and thus symbolised the undaunted spirit of the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of all the nations of the world resisting forces of aggression."

On the morning of January 14, 1944, Soviet forces went over to the offensive. By the end of February 1944 they had cleared nearly the whole of the Leningrad region of enemy troops. Twenty-six

enemy divisions were routed. The enemy were pushed 220-280 kilometres away from Leningrad.

The liberation campaign of the Red Army

It became obvious that the Soviet Union would be able by its own strength to destroy the fascist bloc utterly, and free the peoples of Europe from fascist tyranny. The political leaders of the United States and Britain had not thought that the Soviet Union would be capable of such a feat, and they hastened to open a second front in Europe.

On June 6, 1944, after long and thorough preparation British, US and Canadian troops, under the joint command of Dwight Eisenhower, landed in Normandy in northern France. At long last Nazi Germany was sandwiched between two fronts, in the East and West. The landing of Allied troops across the English Channel–an extensive operation code-named "Overlord"–created the prerequisites for swiftly completing the rout of the fascist-militarist bloc in Europe. But since the second front was opened as late as June 1944, when the Soviet army was already on the threshold of the Nazi Reich, it could not have had a decisive influence on the course of the war. The Soviet-German front remained the most important one in the Second World War, where the Nazis continued to hold more than half of their forces even after the landing of Allied troops in northern France.

In 1944, when Soviet territory was cleared of enemy hordes, the Red Army crossed the Soviet frontier and continued to smash fascist forces as they retreated. Pursuing the retreating enemy it entered Romania on March 27 and Poland on July 17. These

two countries and later also other countries were liberated from fascist occupation. On their territory the Red Army pursued but one aim: to finish off the enemy and help the enslaved peoples of Europe, including the workers and peasants of Germany itself, to cast off the yoke of fascism.

On July 3, 1941, less than two weeks after Nazi Germany attacked the USSR, Joseph Stalin, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for the Defence, said in a radio broadcast made on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government that the aim of the nationwide Patriotic War against the fascist oppressors was not only to eliminate the danger hanging over the Soviet country, but also to help all European nations that were oppressed by German fascism.

Already in 1942 the Soviet Union began to give extensive aid to the peoples of fascist-occupied countries. National military units of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania and France were formed on Soviet territory, and they fought shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army against the Hitlerites.

Under the impact of the Red Army's victories a powerful Resistance movement developed in the fascist-occupied countries; it had more than 2.2 million participants in seven countries alone–Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Poland, France, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Soviet citizens played a major part in the Resistance. More than 40,000 Soviet prisoners of war who had escaped from Hitler's death camps joined their comrades-in-arms from these countries in guerilla warfare.

In the battles for the liberation of Eastern and Central Europe from the Nazi invaders, Soviet soldiers fought as bravely and heroically as they did in bat-

tles against the fascists in their own country. More than three million Soviet soldiers lay down their lives to free Europe from fascism. Here is an incident which occurred in those memorable days.

On July 26, 1944, Grigory Kunavin, a private first class in the 1021st Rifle Regiment of the 307th Rifle Division, was killed in action near the Polish village of Herasimowicze. When the company in which he served attacked the village, it was stopped by an enemy machine gun in a pill-box situated on high ground dominating the area. The company lay in wait. Then the gallant soldier rushed forward and covered the gun-port of the pill-box with his body. He was killed instantly. The company advanced and freed the village. At their general meeting on August 9, 1944, the inhabitants of Herasimowicze adopted this resolution: "Grigory Pavlovich Kunavin came to our land from the distant Urals as a fighter and liberator. The enemy's bullets pierced his heart. But by his death he paved the way for the victory of the Red Army. Like the Red Army men who were as brave as he was, he fought for our happiness; he fought so that the enemy may never again set foot on the threshold of our home.

"We raise high the name of the Russian soldier Grigory Kunavin as a banner of the brotherhood of the Russian and Polish peoples... As a token of gratitude to the Russian brother-liberator, the general meeting of the villagers in Herasimowicze resolves: (1) to enter the name of the Russian soldier Grigory Pavlovich Kunavin in the roll of honoured citizens of the Polish village of Herasimowicze; (2) to carve his name on a marble slab and put it up in the centre of the village; (3) to suggest that the school attended by our children be named after Grigory Kunavin; (4) to have teachers every year be-

gin the first lesson in the first class with the story of the soldier-hero and his brothers-in-arms, who shed their blood so that Polish children may have the right to freedom and happiness. The children should stand while listening to the story. They should take pride in their Slav brother. Their understanding of life should begin with the idea of the brotherhood of the Polish and Russian peoples."

The Yalta Conference Another Conference of heads of government of the Allied Powers in the anti-Hitler coalition (the USSR, the United States and Britain) took place from February 4 to 12, 1945, in the Crimea, near the Black Sea resort of Yalta. As in Teheran, the Soviet delegation was headed by Joseph Stalin, the US delegation by Franklin Roosevelt and the British delegation by Winston Churchill. This was the last Allied conference with the participation of Roosevelt; he died in April of the same year.

The Yalta Conference adopted decisions on joint actions against Nazi Germany at the concluding stage of the war. It stated that after the rout of fascism Germany would be occupied by Allied troops. Zones of occupation were established. A Control Commission consisting of representatives of the Commands of the Allied countries was to be set up in Berlin. The conference adopted a decision on the elimination of German militarism and Nazism, and on reparation payments by Germany for the damage it had caused European countries. It was decided to wipe out the Nazi Party and all Nazi organisations and institutions. The participants in the conference discussed the question of creating a United Nations Organisation as a body for safeguarding peace and

the security of nations. The Yalta Conference was of great importance for international cooperation: it laid the foundations for the postwar democratic order of the world.

At the conference an agreement was also adopted by the three great powers on questions pertaining to the Far East. The agreement officially stipulated that the Soviet Union should join the war against Japan. And it emphasised, among other things, that after the war the southern part of the island of Sakhalin and the islands adjoining it, once seized by Japan from Russia, would be returned to the USSR; and the Kurile Islands would be handed over to the Soviet Union.

Action on German Soil

In early 1945 Soviet troops reached the frontiers of Germany and started combat operations against the enemy on their own land. Soviet troops did not come here as avengers, not as invaders, but as liberators of the German people from fascism.

The Communist Party and the Soviet government repeatedly emphasised that the USSR was waging a war against German fascism, not against the German people. As Soviet troops were pushing toward Germany, on January 19, 1945, the Soviet Supreme Commander, Joseph Stalin, issued an order forbidding ill-treatment of the German population. The Red Army men strictly abided by this order. Each of them remembered the words: "Hitlers come and go but the German people remains."

This had a considerable effect on the attitude of the German population towards the Red Army. Appeals of the Nazi leaders that the German people

form "Werwolf" detachments to carry out acts of sabotage against the advancing Soviet troops went unheeded.

Victory in the spring of 1945

The Red Army's actions on the Soviet-German front and the advance of the Allies in the West hastened the collapse of the Nazi Reich, which the Hitlerites had said would exist for a thousand years. Italy capitulated as early as 1943. Finland withdrew from the war in 1944. The Red Army's victories in the countries of central and southeast Europe furthered the anti-fascist movement in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary, which had broken with Nazi Germany and declared war against it. The increasing attacks mounted by the US Army, Air Force and Navy in the Pacific Ocean area practically deprived another fascist plunderer, militarist Japan, of its conquests there.

In the spring of 1945 the Nazi Command mobilised all its forces in an attempt to stop the Red Army's advance on Berlin. "The war will be decided in the east, not in the west," said an appeal to Nazi troops issued by the leadership of the National Socialist Party on April 3, 1945. It added that the Red Army's imminent great charge must be beaten off under any circumstances, that the men and materiel required for the repulsion were available, and that attention must be focussed only on the east no matter what happened in the west. It was also asserted that preservation of Nazi positions at the Eastern front would bring about a turning point in the war.

At the immediate approaches to Berlin the Hitlerites built three encircling defence lines (outer, inner and municipal) and nine defence sectors inside the city itself. Barricades, anti-tank obstacles, roadblocks and concrete bunkers were put up in the streets. The Nazi leadership ordered that every street and sidestreet, every square, house, canal and bridge be made into a component element of the city's defence. Hundreds of thousands of people were involved in defence work in Berlin, and crack police and SS units were concentrated there.

Nazi forces in the Berlin area totalled one million men and officers, more than 10,000 artillery pieces, 1,500 tanks and assault guns, and over 3,000 combat aircraft.

On April 16, 1945, the Red Army launched its Berlin operation. And on April 25, 1945, the ring around Berlin was closed; a 400,000-strong enemy grouping was trapped. On the same day Soviet and Western Allied troops met on the Elbe.

For several days fierce battles were fought in the streets of Berlin. Despite the frenzied resistance of the enemy, Soviet units and units of the Polish forces gradually moved towards the centre of the city. On April 30 Hitler committed suicide. On the night of May 2 the Berlin army group of the Nazi forces surrendered.

On May 9 a fast-moving attack by Soviet troops along three fronts, in which a Czechoslovak corps participated, liberated Prague, the Czechoslovak capital. On the previous day representatives of the routed Armed Forces of Germany were brought to the headquarters of the Soviet forces in Berlin. Top representatives of the US, British and French armies also arrived there. On the night of May 8 the Act

of Capitulation was signed in the Berlin suburb of Karlshorst. The Nazi Reich ceased to exist. In Europe the war was over.

Victory over Hitler Germany created conditions that enabled the working people of Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and other East European countries to overthrow the anti-popular regimes and establish a people's democracy.

Some Western historians have invented a theory of the "export of revolution": they claim that the Red Army entered the countries it liberated against the will of their peoples. This is a gross distortion of the Red Army's relations with the local population. "Revolutions," Lenin said, "are not made to order, they cannot be timed for any particular moment; they mature in a process of historical development and break out at a moment determined by a whole complex of internal and external causes."

The war exerted a tremendous influence on the political consciousness of the working masses; it helped them to better understand the causes of the war and increased their determination to fight against capitalist oppression and for national emancipation.

"Those who went through the Second World War and took part in the anti-fascist struggle," said Gustav Husak, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, "will never forget the Soviet Union's exceptional role in the battle for the freedom of nations, its sacrifices, and the heroism of its people and army. They will never forget that it was the Soviet Union's struggle and sacrifices that enabled many nations to regain their freedom and state independence, and also to start fighting for the victory of the working class, for the way to socialism."

The Potsdam Conference The heads of government of the three great powers met in Potsdam from July 17 to August 2, 1945. Sharp disputes developed at the conference over key problems of the postwar order of the world. The British and US representatives wanted a revision of the decisions adopted at the Yalta Conference. The US delegation tried to dictate terms to the USSR. To add "weight" to his stand, the head of the US delegation, President Harry Truman, indicated to Stalin that the United States possessed a weapon of enormous destructive power–the atomic bomb. On July 16 the United States had conducted an A-bomb test. But the "atomic blackmail" failed to impress the Soviet delegation, which condemned the policy of dictation and called for international co-operation and the pursuance of a joint policy on the German question. The Soviet stand made possible the successful conclusion of the conference.

The decisions of the Potsdam Conference were regarded by freedom-loving nations as a programme for establishing a democratic system in the postwar world and for building a united, independent, democratic and peaceable Germany. However, the ruling circles of the United States and Britain subsequently violated the Potsdam agreements by supporting West German imperialism and revenge-seeking policies. To a certain extent this was a repetition of their anti-Soviet policy of the 1920s and 1930s which involved the appeasement of Germany and which, as is known, led to the Second World War. Through the fault of the United States and other powers which began to kindle a "cold war", the fulfilment of many of the decisions adopted in Potsdam was disrupted.

Hostilities in Asia and the Pacific Ocean

After the rout of Hitler Germany the Second World War still raged on in Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

By early 1945 the Japanese invaders had managed to score major victories in China. They reached the southwestern regions of that country and linked up with their troops operating in French Indo-China. An unbroken front line was established from Peking to Singapore. The Japanese army was a formidable force. A long struggle was needed if it were to be defeated. According to estimates of the Anglo-American Joint Chiefs of Staffs Committee presented to Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, it would take the Armed Forces of the United States and Britain another 18 months after the end of the war with Germany to bring Japan to its knees. In other words, the war might drag on to the end of 1946.

These estimates were not entirely wrong.

In the summer of 1945 Japan possessed not only a five-million-strong army and navy, over 10,000 combat aircraft; there were powerful fortifications in Japan itself and in occupied areas of China. The Anglo-American land forces in the Pacific Ocean and in the countries of southeast Asia numbered only two million men. The Japanese military command hoped to block the further advance of the Anglo-American forces and prevent their landing on the territory of Japan. It is not surprising that when the US Army Chief of Staff, General George Marshall, met President Truman in the White House on June 18, 1945, he pointed out the importance of "Russia's joining the war" and said that Russia might be the decisive force that would compel Japan to surrender.

In keeping with its Allied commitments the Soviet Union joined the war against Japan in August 1945. On the 9th of August the Japanese Imperial Army was attacked in the Far East by Soviet and Mongolian troops on land, from the air and from the sea along the entire frontier with northeast China and on the eastern coast of northern Korea. Soviet troops linked up in the central regions of Manchuria and occupied its major cities and administrative and industrial centres. The Soviet Pacific Fleet successfully landed troops on the Kurile Islands, southern Sakhalin and Korea. In the course of combat operations the million-strong Kwangtung army–the main striking power of militarist Japan's land forces–was routed. In the face of inevitable defeat the Emperor was compelled to declare Japan's capitulation.

The United States dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities–on Hiroshima on August 6, and on Nagasaki on August 9. This was a barbaric and a militarily senseless act: it was merely a demonstration of strength to the world. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were razed and demolished; the bombs killed and crippled nearly 500,000 people.

In Western, especially US, literature it is asserted that it was not until the atomic bombs were dropped that Japan capitulated.

It should be pointed out that in Japan itself a different view was expressed on the USSR's entry into the war and the dropping of atomic bombs by the United States on the Japanese cities.

"Irrespective of the development of hostilities against Great Britain and America," said the Japanese Supreme Council for the Conduct of the War in its decision adopted in May 1945 in Tokyo, "it is imperative that we should do our utmost to prevent the USSR's entry into war with us. The be-

ginning of a war with the USSR will be a fatal blow to our empire."

The first sitting of the Japanese Cabinet (August 9, 1945) after the atomic bombings dealt not with the impact of the A-bombs on the course of military operations, but with the general change brought about by the USSR's actions. Japanese Prime Minister Kantaro Suzuki told a meeting of the Supreme Council for the Conduct of the War: "The Soviet Union's entry into the war this morning definitely puts us in a hopeless situation and makes further continuation of the war impossible."

On September 2, 1945, Japan's representatives signed the Act of Unconditional Surrender presented by the Allies on board the US battleship *Missouri.*

With the capitulation of all the Japanese fighting services the Second World War came to an end.

The main military results of the war

The Second World War, which lasted six years, ended with the utter defeat of the fascist aggressors. The decisive role in the achievement of victory was played by the Soviet Union–the main force in the anti-fascist coalition.

In the Soviet Union the contribution of the United States, Britain and other Western countries in the anti-Hitler coalition to the victory over the fascist-militarist bloc is duly acknowledged. Soviet publications gave truthful accounts of the operations and battles in which the Western Allies fought in East and North Africa, Italy, France and on the Asian continent, the sea battles near Midway Island and in the Leute Gulf, the fighting on sea routes, the air

battles over England, the Allies' air attacks on Germany and other engagements, the contribution of their war economies, including the aid given to the USSR by the United States under the Lend-Lease Act. A great deal of attention is paid to the Resistance movement and its significance, and to the anti-fascist struggle of freedom-loving peoples in all countries and continents. [1]

But it is an irrefutable historical fact that it was the Soviet Union which bore the main brunt of the fighting against the fascist aggressors and made the decisive contribution to the common victory.

At none of the other fronts of the Second World War (North-African, Italian, West European, American-Japanese) were such enormous masses of troops and materiel involved in combat operations as at the Soviet-German front. It was here that an average of about 75 per cent of the divisions of Nazi Germany and a very large part of the forces of its allies operated throughout the war. It can be said that three out of every four soldiers of Hitler's Wehrmacht constantly fought in the East and only one in the West.

This is why at the Soviet-German front 507 German divisions and nearly 100 divisions of Germany's satellites were routed. Soviet troops also destroyed a large amount of the enemy's materiel: 167,000 guns, 48,000 tanks, and about 77,000 aircraft.

The armies of the United States, Britain and other participants in the anti-Hitler coalition put out of action only 176 divisions, or less than one-third of the total number of divisions lost by Nazi Germany

[1] For example, much space is devoted to these questions in the multivolume *History of the Second World War, 1939-1945*, the publication (in Russian) of which is being completed in the USSR.

and its allies. Its war against the USSR cost Germany 10 million lives, which is three-quarters of its total casualties in the Second World War.

As Leonid Brezhnev said, "The Soviet people's heroic struggle brought about a radical change in the course of the Second World War. Its battles were fought over a vast expanse, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, from the ice fields of Greenland to the deserts of Africa, but it was the Soviet-German front that became the main theatre of military operations. That is where the destinies were decided not only of the Soviet people but of mankind."

What made the Soviet people victorious

At an international conference held not so long ago in the English town of Sandhurst, one of the foreign representatives addressed this question to the Soviet historians: "We believe that the extraordinary heroism and fortitude displayed by the Red Army in the difficult year of 1941 were due to the natural qualities of the Russian soldier, who has always been selfless in defending his home and family from foreign invasion. Do you agree with this point of view?"

The reply was: "Yes, in the course of centuries the Russian people had many a time courageously repulsed foreign invaders, fought heroically against foreign oppressors and aggressors, be they Tatar-Mongolian khans or German crusaders (in the earlier days of Russia). The Russian people's heroism in the war against Napoleon in 1812 is also well known.

"Such was the Russian people's heroism which arose out of a love for their homeland. This love increased a hundred times after the socialist revo-

lution of 1917, when the people became the master of their country and their future, for the revolution established the people's power on the vast territory of what was tsarist Russia and set up the first worker-peasant state in the history of mankind.

"From the very first days of its existence the Red Army, which was created by the revolution, was an army in which soldiers and commanders were members of one close-knit family–a family of working men and women. It was an army of friendship of the peoples, one in which members of all the nations and nationalities of the multinational Soviet Union fought shoulder to shoulder. And it won."

As Lenin had foreseen, "A nation in which the majority of the workers and peasants realise, feel and see that they are fighting for their own Soviet power, for the rule of the working people, for the cause whose victory will ensure them and their children all the benefits of culture, of all that has been created by human labour–such a nation can never be vanquished."

The Soviet people's victory in the Second World War is due primarily to the very nature of the socialist social and political system, to the socialist patriotism of Soviet people, to the inviolable alliance of the workers and peasants, to the indestructible friendship of the Soviet peoples, to the unity of those fighting at the front and those working behind enemy lines, the unity of the army and the people–factors which are intrinsic only to a socialist society.

The Soviet Union's victory in the Great Patriotic War was due, above all, to the advantages of the economic and political organisation of socialist society.

In spite of the fact that Nazi Germany possessed far greater economic resources because it had sub-

dued nearly the whole of Europe, the Soviet economy gained the upper hand in the war. Although it had about one-third of the amount of coal and one-third to one-fourth of the steel Nazi Germany had, the USSR produced in the war years twice as much and more sophisticated military equipment: 490,000 guns, about 137,000 aircraft, 102,500 tanks and self-propelled artillery mounts. Suffice it to recall the world-renowned T-34 tanks, the IL-2 attack aircraft, and the *Katyusha* rocket projectors, which had no equal in the Second World War.

Today's falsifiers of history go out of their way to minimise the role of the USSR and its war economy in the rout of Nazi Germany and militarist Japan, and to exaggerate the importance of lend-lease deliveries to the USSR. As a matter of fact, US-British deliveries came to less than four per cent of Soviet war production.

Soviet agriculture solved the food problem and provided the raw materials needed by industry.

The Soviet system of government demonstrated its invincible power in the war. Through the Soviets of Working People's Deputies and through the local defence committees in towns in the frontline area, the socialist state carried out a vast amount of work of mobilising all resources for the rout of the enemy.

After their sudden attack on the Soviet Union, the Hitlerites intended to drive a wedge between the working class and the peasantry by means of political sabotage, and to kindle internecine strife between the Russian people and the other peoples of the USSR. That was bad judgement on their part. The Great Patriotic War brought the workers, farmers and people's intelligentsia even closer together, and led to an unprecedented upsurge of patriotism

both at the front and behind enemy lines. The fight against the fascist aggressors further cemented the friendship of the peoples of the USSR. In the parts of Soviet republics which they captured, the Hitlerites failed to form even the likeness of puppet governments.

By its foreign-policy activity the Soviet state succeeded in creating the most favourable international conditions for the conduct of the war. Its main efforts in this sphere were directed toward strengthening the anti-Hitler coalition, weakening the fascist bloc and isolating Nazi Germany within the bloc. On the eve of the war the USSR had diplomatic relations with 25 countries, and at the end of the war—with 49.

The war demonstrated not only the indisputable advantages of the Soviet economic and political systems, but also the extraordinary influence exerted by the ideology of socialism.

These advantages were ultimately manifested in the superiority of the Soviet Armed Forces over the invading armies in organisation and military art.

The multi-million-strong Red Army demonstrated its high morale during the war. To the Communist Party and its political workers and commissars goes the credit for educating the Soviet soldiers. They gave them ideological training, imbued them with a great love for the Motherland, instilled in them confidence in their strength, and inspired them to feat of arms. Leonid Brezhnev said in his brilliant book *Little Land:* "A true political worker in the army is a man with deep knowledge of the soldiers' mood, their needs, hopes and dreams; he inspires them to self-sacrifice and to heroic deeds. If we bear in mind that the fighting spirit of troops has always been considered a very important element of their courage, then the most effective weapon of the war was

in hands of the political workers. It was they who steeled the soldiers' hearts and minds and without that nothing–not tanks, guns or planes–would have won victory for us."

The Supreme Command and the General Headquarters of the Red Army directed the troops with skill. The Red Army was in every way superior to Hitler's Wehrmacht in military art. The foiling of Nazi Germany's plan to take the USSR by a blitzkrieg and the rout of the Nazi forces in the Battles of Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk and in other decisive battles were due largely to the soundness of Soviet strategies. Later on US State Secretary Edward R. Stettinius wrote that had the Soviet Union not held its front, the Germans would have been able to capture Britain and then Africa, in which case they would have been able to build a beachhead in Latin America.

An important factor contributing to the Red Army's victory was the consistent support it received from the people in Nazi-occupied areas. The Nazis installed regimes of terror in the regions they captured, but this failed to shake the fortitude of Soviet people. Communist Party organs continued to guide partisan warfare and resistance to the enemy behind the enemy lines, where partisan units tied up a considerable segment of the enemy forces. In 1943 the Nazi Command had to throw 25 divisions, over half a million soldiers, into the battle against partisans. There was a total of more than 1.1 million partisans in the years of the Great Patriotic War.

The architect of the Soviet people's victory was the Communist Party and its Central Committee. The Party united the efforts of those fighting at the front and those working behind the enemy lines and directed them toward a single goal–victory over the

enemy. In the war years about two million Communist Party members lay down their lives in the name of this victory. But the Party was not weakened by this. Far from dwindling, its militancy increased: during the war more than three million people joined the Party.

In the history of mankind there is no other war in which the interests of the people, the state and the ruling party were so closely united, as in the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people.

Chapter III

OUR PLANET NEEDS PEACE

A change in the alignment of forces

The victory over German fascism and Japanese militarism produced a fundamental change in international relations. On the one hand, the prestige of the Soviet Union rose sharply, the influence of Communist and Workers' parties grew, and the working-class and national liberation movements became more active; on the other hand, the world capitalist system became weaker, and colonialism began to decline.

The victory over fascism and militarism shows that there is no power in the world that can turn back the clock of history and put an end to the revolutionary changes initiated by the Great October Socialist Revolution.

The rout of German fascism created favourable conditions for the triumph of the anti-fascist, national liberation, and revolutionary movements in Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Albania and the eastern part of Germany.

As a result of the victory over the Japanese militarists the liberation struggle of the peoples of Korea and Vietnam developed into a struggle for the establishment of a people's democracy. The people's revolution in China triumphed primarily as a result of the rout of Japanese militarism.

Favourable international conditions were thus created for the waging of national liberation revolutions in the colonial and dependent countries; the centuries-old system of colonialism crumbled. Over the postwar years about 90 new sovereign states emerged in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This confirms Lenin's thesis set forth in his report at the Second All-Russia Congress of Communist Organisations of the Peoples of the East: "...The socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie–no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialist-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries, against international imperialism."

Socialism becomes a world system

For nearly 30 years after its socialist revolution the Soviet Union was the only socialist country in the world. After the Second World War drastic changes appeared on the political map of the world. The triumph of socialist revolutions in a number of European and Asian countries led to the emergence of quite a large group of states with the same type of economic basis (public ownership of the means of production), the same type of political system (the power of the people headed by the working class), and with the same ideology (Marxism-Leninism).

Since the socialist countries are vitally interested in defending their revolutionary gains against attacks from the capitalist camp, they have established between themselves relations based on co-operation and mutual assistance. And since they have a common great goal–the building of communism–they have

united to form a socialist community of states. Thus a world socialist system came into being for the first time in the history of mankind. Its formation marked the beginning of a new, socialist, type of international relations founded on the principles of proletarian internationalism. A new stage began in the development of international socialism.

The "cold war" against the USSR

The worldwide changes which occurred after the Second World War were found unacceptable by the ruling classes of the imperialist powers, above all those of the United States, which had thought that the participation of the United States in the war would lead to the establishment of its world domination. Thus from the very first postwar years the United States embarked on a "position of strength" policy towards the Soviet Union, which in effect meant preparation for a new war for world domination.

The essence of this policy was expressed by Winston Churchill in a speech he made in March 1946 in the US town of Fulton. He threatened the Soviet Union with American atomic weapons and called for the setting up of an Anglo-American military-political alliance aimed at "defending Western civilisation" from communism.

The anti-Soviet policy of the imperialist states as expounded by Churchill came to be known as the "cold war" policy. Its material basis was the extensive preparations made by the US government for waging a war against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The "cold war" involved military-strategic measures, political blackmail, the forming of aggressive blocs, economic expansion, ideological

sabotage, and the allocation of huge sums of money for carrying out subversive activity against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Over the thirty-odd years following the Second World War there have been different presidents, different military doctrines and political strategies in the United States; but the aggressive essence and anti-Soviet trend of its foreign and military policies have remained unchanged.

In a "total war" against the USSR the US military planned to use all available nuclear missile weapons in air, ground and sea strikes. They were increasing the number of launching pads for ground-based missiles, and at the same time started large-scale construction of missile-launching nuclear submarines.

By 1949 the United States had 1,615,000 men and officers in its Armed Forces. This was an unprecedented number of regular troops for the United States at a time when the country was not waging war and was not confronted with a threat of attack from outside.

Another key objective of US military policy in the late 1940s and 1950s was the creation of a system of aggressive, anti-Soviet blocs and alliances. This policy culminated in the formation in 1949 of NATO, whose members included the United States, Canada and thirteen capitalist states of Europe. Soon afterwards NATO was joined by the US-sponsored imperialist military blocs in Asia–SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, which subsequently became CENTO. A component part of this policy was the building of a chain of US military bases around the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Using these blocs the Pentagon stationed US strategic aircraft

armed with atomic bombs at its bases close to Soviet frontiers.

At the first Peace Congress held in April 1949 a Soviet delegate, the writer Ilya Erenburg, said aptly: "After the publication of the text of the latest military deal (i.e. NATO), its apologists declared with satisfaction: 'The division of the world is now fixed.' Yes, it is really fixed... But not along the line drawn by the authors of the pact. It is a division between men of the past and men of the future, between the dollar and conscience, between the atomic bomb and genuine humanism, between the spade of the gravedigger and the spade of the gardener..."

The "Dropshot" plan

One can form an idea of the plans and objectives of the military and militarist circles in the United States from US government documents, especially from those concerning "Dropshot"—the plan for a world war which the United States was to unleash in 1957 under the pretext of "Soviet aggression".

The plan was worked out by the National Security Council, the State Department and the Pentagon, and approved by the US President. "Dropshot" was preceded by a whole series of similar plans, the first of which, called "Totality", was proposed by the Commander-in-Chief of the US occupation forces in Europe (subsequently US President), General Dwight Eisenhower, as early as 1945. [1] Fifty-one

[1] In a talk he had with Joseph Stalin in August 1945, just about the time the "Totality" plan was being devised, Eisenhower assured the Soviet leader that he fully agreed with the latter on the need to do everything to prevent a new world war (see G. K. Zhukov, *Reminiscences and Reflections*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1978, pp. 373-374).

days after the end of the Second World War, in which, as is known, the United States was an ally of the USSR in the fight against the common enemy, the Pentagon completed a detailed plan for delivering twenty atomic strikes on the Soviet Union.

The main political goal of the new world war, as follows from these plans, was to uproot Bolshevism by routing the USSR and its allies militarily. Thus the US imperialists hoped to destroy the socialist system in the flame of war, set history back and restore capitalism and colonialism all over the world. According to the "Dropshot" plan, the most serious threat to the national security of the United States (that is, to the power of the monopolies) is the socialist system.

The strategic thinking behind the "Dropshot" plan was that the United States and its allies should jointly achieve the aims of the war against the USSR by breaking the Soviet will and ability to resist, and toward this end launch a strategic offensive in Western Eurasia and ensure a strategic defence in the Far East.

Such a scheme was to be carried out in several stages.

First, joint US-British air operations were to be conducted against the USSR and other socialist countries with the use of nuclear weapons (300 atomic bombs within 30 days). The attacks on the USSR were to be mounted from bases situated in the United States, Great Britain, the Cairo-Suez-Aden area, Alaska and Okinawa, and also from aircraft carriers.

Then, offensive operations were to be worked out whose objective was to enter the territory of the USSR and its allies, rout the Soviet Armed Forces, first of all the land forces, and occupy the socialist

countries after dividing them into "control zones". Simultaneously in the Far East it was planned to capture the Korean People's Democratic Republic.

The total number of occupation troops was to be about one million. They were to be stationed along a line stretching from Berlin and Skoplje to Vladivostok and Pyongyang. By the time of the occupation the majority of the population of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries were to have been exterminated by nuclear bombardments. The "Dropshot" plan pointed out that in the given campaign emphasis was on the physical extermination of the enemy, that is, citizens of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries without distinction as to sex, age, colour of skin and religious belief. It was assumed that as a result of atomic strikes some 6 million people would be killed in the USSR in the first days of the war.

The installation of puppet governments in the USSR and other socialist countries, according to the "Dropshot" plan, would mark the achievement of its main goal–the elimination of people's power in the countries of the socialist community.

These plans of international imperialism were not carried out. The US ruling circles did not manage to plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust.

A third world war did not break out only because imperialism's aggressive plans were–and are–countered by the active anti-war policy of the USSR and the fraternal socialist countries and developing nations, by the powerful anti-war protests of the world's progressive forces. The key factor that prevented the United States from unleashing a world war was its failure to achieve military superiority over the USSR.

New plans in the 1960s

In the early 1960s US military planners elaborated what they called the strategy of "flexible response". This was the result of an awareness in the United States of the growing military and political strength of the countries of the socialist community, and of the risk involved in a nuclear missile confrontation with the Soviet Union. The architects of the new strategy regarded "local wars" as more suitable for the United States because they would enable it "step by step" to attain its foreign policy goals by military means and at the same time to continue to prepare for a nuclear missile war against the USSR.

The strategy of "flexible response" involved diverse forms of aggression, as subsequent events showed. In 1961 the United States attempted to invade Cuba and launched a programme of creating "multilateral nuclear forces" within NATO. The aggressive course of the United States became even more blatant after the murder in 1963 of President Kennedy, whose more realistic views irked the US arch-reactionaries. The United States openly claimed the right of armed intervention in other countries for the purpose of "saving" them from "world communism". It was in that period that the escalation of the US war in Vietnam began. In April 1965 the US military helped the military junta in the Dominican Republic to strangle the revolution there. In the same year US troops helped to quash the national liberation movement in the Congo (Kinshasa). As US Defence Secretary Robert McNamara later admitted, within a mere eight years, from 1959 to 1966, the US Armed Forces were involved in 157 operations to "normalise the situation" in regions beyond the borders of the United States.

By 1969 the United States had 432 large military bases in 68 countries, mostly located near the Soviet Union and other socialist countries; almost half the strength of the US Armed Forces were stationed outside the United States.

Accordingly, US military allocations have been increasing: in the 1960s they almost doubled, having risen from 48,000 million dollars in 1960 to 88,000 million dollars in 1969.

The military-industrial complex and the arms race

The "cold war", and the "hot wars" waged by the United States in Korea and Vietnam led to militarisation of the US economy to an unprecedented extent and brought huge profits to the monopolies connected with the production of arms. Arms production in fact became the main form of economic stimulation in the United States. It is an unwritten law in the United States that the richest monopolies are those which are awarded the biggest military contracts. Thus a military-industrial complex came into being which has a tremendous influence on US home and foreign policies.

"Military-industrial complex" is now a popular term denoting the intertwining of the enormous war machine and the top banking and industrial corporations. It exerts a powerful impact on all aspects of life of US society. It is vitally interested in whipping up tension and spurring on the arms race, for they bring super-profits. This is what Marx and Engels wrote: "With adequate profit, capital is very bold. A certain 10 per cent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent certain will produce eagerness; 50 per cent, positive audacity; 100 per cent will make it ready to trample on all human

laws; 300 per cent, and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged."

Today the war monopolies pocket even larger profits. US Senator Paul Douglas once disclosed that for a small plug socket for an electric lamp which cost 25 cents in any shop, the Navy Department paid their suppliers 21 dollars and 10 cents, or 84 times as much, and that for a yard of electric cable that cost 3 dollars and 60 cents in a shop the Department of the Air Force paid the arms factories 50 dollars. One can imagine the amount of profit which the latest bombers and nuclear submarines have yielded!

The profits of US military-industrial corporations soared in the "hot war" period. For example, in the years of US aggression in Indo-China they increased by an average of 25.8 per cent. That is why US big business is always for war, for a continuation of the arms race, for the preservation of tension in the world.

From 1945 on, the United States and its partners in military blocs triggered off more than 100 wars and military conflicts, many of which lasted from five to ten years and more. About 30 of them were of a "collective" nature; that is, they were launched by several interventionists, led by the United States, either overtly or covertly. In regional wars and local conflicts millions of troops from imperialist countries were involved. The total number of victims in only 36 of these wars was nearly 20 million.

All the regional wars unleashed by the imperialists were spearheaded either against socialist countries (Korea, Cuba, Vietnam), or against national liberation revolutions in countries of Africa, Asia

and Latin America. All these wars, with few exceptions, ended in the military-political defeat of the imperialists and their accomplices.

The Soviet Union stands for peace and social progress

From the very outset the Soviet state proclaimed its principal foreign-policy task to be the safeguarding of peace and the security of nations. On October 26 (November 8), 1917 the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted the Decree on Peace–the general platform of Soviet foreign policy.

With the emergence of socialist countries in Europe and Asia after the Second World War, the world socialist system became the leading force in the struggle for peace and social progress, against the aggressive policies of imperialism.

Relying on their growing economic strength and political stability and cohesion, the fraternal socialist states have proved to be tireless and consistent fighters against the aggression of the United States and its satellites. In these conditions imperialism finds itself incapable of turning back the clock of history by means of force or by any other means. The forces of imperialism had suffered crushing defeat when they perpetrated aggression, direct or indirect, against socialist countries: Korea (1953), the German Democratic Republic (1953), Hungary (1956), Cuba (1961-62), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Vietnam (1964-75).

A number of foreign policy moves undertaken by the countries of the socialist community in the 1960s helped to overcome the "cold war". On Au-

gust 5, 1963 the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water was signed in Moscow. By the spring of 1968, 144 states had become signatories to the treaty, which had become known as the "Moscow Treaty". In the same year the Soviet government undertook the initiative of creating the necessary conditions for developing co-operation with France and a number of other capitalist states. In October 1970 an agreement was signed between France and the USSR on the holding of political consultations if a situation should arise which creates a threat to peace or which constitutes a violation of peace or causes international tension.

The Treaty between the USSR and the Federal Republic of Germany, signed in August 1970 on the initiative of the USSR, was a significant contribution to a relaxation of tension. The two sides affirmed that they had no territorial claims on anyone and would make no such claims in the future. They declared that they would not resort to force in respect to each other and regard the existing frontiers in Europe as inviolable.

The Soviet Peace Programme A new international situation took shape in the early 1970s. On the basis of an objective evaluation of that situation and of the factors operating in international relations, the Soviet Union advanced a Peace Programme. Its aim is to bring about a turn from the "cold war" to peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, a turn from tension to detente and mutually advantageous co-operation. And this aim is to be achieved on the basis of the cohesion and resources of world social-

ism, on its growing alliance with all progressive forces.

The tasks envisaged in the Peace Programme are: to eliminate the hotbeds of war in southeast Asia and the Middle East; to make the principle of renunciation of the threat or use of force a law of international life; to work for the convocation and success of an all-European conference with the aim of achieving a radical turn towards detente and peace in Europe; to set up a system of collective security in Europe; simultaneously to dissolve the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; to ban all types of mass destruction weapons; to call a world disarmament conference; to wipe out the remnants of colonialism; and to develop mutually advantageous co-operation with all states.

An important section of the Peace Programme deals with the task of improving relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. The US ruling circles, aware of the might of the Soviet Union in all spheres and realising the futility of a policy oriented toward a world war, took some steps to normalise Soviet-US relations. The Soviet-US agreements concluded in the 1970s brought about positive changes in these relations and became a vital factor in furthering a relaxation of international tension. However, further improvement of Soviet-US relations is hampered owing to obstacles created by the US military-industrial complex, which feeds on the arms race. "It is no secret," said Leonid Brezhnev at the 25th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, "that some of the difficulties stem from those aspects of Washington's policy which jeopardise the freedom and independence of the peoples and constitute a

gross interference in their internal affairs by siding with the forces of oppression and reaction."

To make Europe a continent of peace

The vigorous foreign-policy activity of the countries of the socialist community constituted an important step toward turning Europe into a continent of peace. This was facilitated by the signing in September 1971 of an agreement by the Soviet Union, the United States, Britain and France on West Berlin, which affirms that the western sectors of Berlin are not a part of the Federal Republic of Germany. In December 1972 a treaty on the relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic was signed, in which the two sides pledge to observe each other's territorial integrity. In December 1973 a treaty on the normalisation of relations between Czechoslovakia and the FRG was concluded, which declares the Munich diktat of 1938 null and void, thereby facilitating an improvement of the situation in Central Europe.

The convocation of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe marked a signal success in the fulfilment of the Peace Programme. The conference ended with the signing in Helsinki in August 1975 of the Final Act by the leaders of 33 European states and also of the United States and Canada. This document defines the principles by which states should be guided in formulating their policy with regard to Europe: (1) sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty; (2) refraining from the threat or use of force; (3) inviolability of frontiers; (4) territorial integrity of states; (5) peaceful settlement of disputes;

(6) non-intervention in internal affairs; (7) respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion and convictions; (8) equal rights and self-determination for the peoples; (9) co-operation among states; and (10) fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law.

The adoption of these principles testified to the vitality of Lenin's thesis on peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems.

The necessity of detente in our time

The Soviet Union is making every effort to deepen detente, turn it into an irreversible process, and complement political with military detente.

The main objective of all Soviet initiatives of that direction is to bring disarmament discussions, which have been conducted on many levels almost continuously since the end of the Second World War, on to the practical level. There is no type of arms which the USSR is unwilling to limit and ultimately ban on a mutual basis.

The opponents of detente find this Soviet stand unpalatable, and they respond with a slander campaign about a "Soviet menace". In doing so they aim to step up the arms race and make even bigger profits from it, to lessen the impact of the socialist countries' foreign policy, to divert the attention of the working people in capitalist countries from domestic problems, and at the same time to present themselves as peace-makers and the Soviet Union as a force detrimental to peace and detente.

Among the sponsors of this campaign are the more aggressive members of the ruling circles of some Western powers, the NATO militarists, the Israeli military, the Chilean fascists, the South African racists, and, of course, the main power behind it–the military-industrial complex of the United States and other major capitalist states. It would not be wrong to say that an international military-industrial complex is at work.

The present leaders of Peking have joined the camp of warmongers and have become active members in it. They, too, are harping on the "Soviet menace" (often louder than the imperialists) and are spreading this myth with great zeal.

The Peking leaders are making a great effort to build up their military potential in their pursuit of great-power, hegemonic aims, which include territorial expansion at the expense of neighbouring states. And the Maoists make no attempts to conceal this. To direct Chinese aggression against the Soviet Union, the militarist circles of the United States, Britain, Federal Germany and other NATO countries are ready to give China extensive credits and provide it with large quantities of arms. On the question of anti-Sovietism there is complete understanding between the Peking militarists and their Western counterparts. It was not by chance that the Supreme Commander of NATO in Europe, General Alexander Haig of the United States, one of the promoters of the myth about the "Soviet threat", called China the "sixteenth member" of the North Atlantic bloc. In his turn Chinese Vice Premier Teng Hsiao-ping, in a conversation with newsmen of the United Press International, cynically agreed to China's being called the "Eastern NATO", emphasising the common interests of China and the

USA in combating the Soviet Union. While the "Soviet threat" campaign is under way, and while they themselves are raising a hue and cry about the "threat from the North", the new Chinese leaders are spending more than 40 per cent of their country's budget on armament. China now firmly holds first place in the world in the growth rate of military spending. In this dangerous race the Maoists are by no means relying "on their own forces". The ruling circles of the imperialist states are willingly offering them their help and services. The "Common Market" countries have granted China most favoured nation treatment in trade and have lifted all restrictions on the sale of strategic goods to China.

But what the Maoists want most of all is the latest Western military technology. To gain access to it they are ready to resort to any means. From the United States alone China has obtained 5,000 patented technical documentations. But since this is expensive, cheaper ways of acquiring advanced technology are sought. One of them is to make use of Chinese residing in foreign countries, among whom there are many scientists and technical specialists. For some time now they have often been invited to China. Quite a few prominent US atomic scientists of Chinese origin went there lately, and told their colleagues engaged in perfecting nuclear weapons about the latest US achievements in that field. In China this ominous exchange of experience is called "the flight of the bees to their hives".

The imperialists are arming China in the hope that its military might will be directed against the Soviet Union only. We know what lamentable consequences some leading Western powers reaped over 40 years ago from their policy of encourag-

ing the fascist-militarist bloc. The present flirtation of the Western powers with Peking and their endeavour to direct the aggressiveness of Chinese social-chauvinism against the Soviet Union remind us (though the historical conditions and the alignment of forces are different today) of the notorious Munich policy, about which we spoke at the beginning of this book.

The aggressive nature of the policy of Maoist China was confirmed by its bandit-like attack on the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. On February 17, 1979, regular troops of the Chinese Armed Forces invaded Vietnamese territory along a broad front. They seized several frontier districts and with the support of huachiao armed bands tried to develop an offensive deep into the country. This act of aggression created an extremely dangerous threat not only to Vietnam but to the whole world. "Any connivance with such a policy is connivance with the use of force and dictation by the Chinese leadership to throw the world into war," said the Soviet government statement of February 19, 1979.

The people of Vietnam dealt the aggressors a crushing counterblow. The criminal action of the Chinese clique met with condemnation by the peoples of the whole world. A mighty campaign of solidarity arose with the call "Hands off Vietnam!" All this forced the Chinese rulers to commence withdrawal of their forces back to Chinese territory. Those who had set out to "teach a lesson" to others received a lesson themselves.

At the same time the aggression against Vietnam showed that the policy of seizing other people's territory has become a component part of the foreign policy doctrine of Maoist China.

Those who are anti-Soviet and anti-communist

are trying to hammer out a united front aimed at preventing the deepening of detente. The NATO leaders are making provocative complaints about the "Soviet military threat", and about the "lack of democracy" and "human rights violations" in socialist countries. Using these complaints as a cover the United States is adopting one decision after another designed to step up the race in strategic nuclear arms which pose the greatest danger to the whole of mankind. In the last few years alone 550 new *Minutemen-3* intercontinental ballistic missiles were put into position; the production of an underwater atomic fleet (29 submarines) with *Trident* missiles has been started; improved *Tomahawk* cruise missiles have been worked out and tested; rockets *MX* with mobile take-off points are being developed; the annual allocations for the production of new offensive strategic arms have been increased four times over, and so on.

The United States is preparing a new lethal weapon of mass destruction of people—the neutron bomb. Among the Washington "hawks", who represent the military-industrial complex, the plan to go ahead with the production of the neutron bomb met with unanimous approval. As United Press International reported from Washington, on September 30, 1978, by a vote of 68 to one the US Senate approved the allocation of 3,000 million dollars for the development of nuclear weapons, including the production of the controversial neutron bomb. As is known, this is a weapon of "enhanced radiation" designed to kill people while leaving material objects intact.

The Senate Armed Forces Committee has recommended the deployment of the neutron bomb along NATO's borders with countries of the social-

ist community. According to the plans of NATO strategists, the neutron bomb is to be deployed first of all on the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany.

A legitimate question arises: will this better provide for the security of the United States itself?

Specialists give a negative answer. This is what an editorial in *The New York Times* (July 31, 1978) said: "One of the ironies of recent history is that the United States invented most of the weapons that, in Soviet hands, now frighten it the most. The multiple-warhead (MIRV) missile that once promised great advantage now looms as the most menacing weapon against our underground missile force. And to meet that menace, we are drifting toward a new invention that could have the same boomerang effect."

Today one need not be a specialist to know that no country can retain for long a monopoly on the technology for making one type of weapon or another.

Disarmament—the road to peace

The main threat to peace—and nobody would dispute this today—stems from the continuing nuclear arms race. The stockpiles of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons have been growing, and qualitative parameters of these weapons are being improved. New types of weapons are being made, such as the neutron bomb, which greatly increases the threat of a limited armed conflict developing into a global thermonuclear war.

Thus of great importance is the Soviet government's proposals that a treaty be concluded obliging states to stop the production of all types of nuclear weapons, with a view to proceeding to

a gradual reduction of their stockpiles until they are eliminated.

At the 33rd session of the UN General Assembly the Soviet Union appealed to the nuclear powers to set a date for starting negotiations on the question. Some non-nuclear states might also participate. It is important that work should be carried out simultaneously for the conclusion of a world treaty on the non-use of force in international relations.

At the same General Assembly session the Soviet Union proposed that an international convention on strengthening security guarantees to the non-nuclear states be concluded, and submitted the draft of such a convention to the delegates. Its enforcement would not only lessen the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear conflict, but improve international climate generally. The idea is to get the nuclear powers to undertake not to use nuclear weapons and not to threaten non-nuclear countries with their use, and to get the non-nuclear countries to pledge not to produce or acquire such weapons or have such weapons on their territories.

Another Soviet proposal aimed at safeguarding peace and preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons calls for the conclusion of an international treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to the territories of those countries which have no such weapons today.

The conventional arms race also constitutes a threat to peace. That is why the Soviet Union has repeatedly drawn attention to the Vienna talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. As is known, in June 1978 the Warsaw Treaty countries made new constructive proposals at these talks. FRG Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has said that these proposals constitute a

sound basis for achieving the goals of the Vienna talks. The same opinion has been expressed by a number of other Western statesmen.

One of the most important Soviet initiatives in the field of disarmament is the proposal to reduce the military budgets of states, primarily of those which possess great military and economic potentials. Having considered the opinion of some countries that before such a reduction can be carried out a comparative study of military budgets should be made (a study that could last for ever), the Soviet Union proposed reducing their sizes not in percentage, but in absolute quantities. This task is relatively easy to cope with. Its speedy fulfilment would mean higher living standards for the peoples and increased aid to the developing countries, to which the USSR proposed to transfer ten per cent of the funds released upon the reduction of military budgets.

We say with confidence that in the world there exist powerful forces capable of preventing, by coordinated actions, a new world war, of curbing the aggressor in good time, and if he dares start a war, of administering a crushing rebuff and foiling his evil plans.

What are these forces?

– the powerful socialist community, which has placed its entire political, economic and military resources at the service of peace;

– the international working class and its vanguard–the communist parties, which expose and disrupt the plans of the warmongers;

– the mass movement for peace, which compels the imperialists to reckon with the will of millions of honest men and women who are determined to defend peace.

In the United States, as in many other NATO countries, there is popular support for disarmament and arms control. But alongside the torrent of words about the impermissibility of continuing the arms race we see deeds which can only be regarded as a spur to the arms race. And it is the United States which is particularly keen on whipping up the arms race, as it was three decades ago, and is trampling on peace.

The scope and pace of the arms race are enormous. Military expenditure in the world rose from 120,000 million dollars in 1961 to 200,000 million in 1970. And from 1970 to 1977 the figure doubled to reach 400,000 million dollars; this has happened at a time when every sixth person in the world does not get enough to eat and at least every third lacks medical care.

Has the security of any nation or any person increased by even a jot because the sums spent on maintaining armies and producing weapons of death have been increasing more than six times faster than in the 1960s? No. On the contrary, the danger of a worldwide conflagration increases each time a new system of weapons is produced. The imperialist forces, as historical experience has shown, are trying to achieve a rate of development of military technology that would give them "military superiority", which, they say, they need in order to "maintain peace more effectively".

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Three lessons may be derived from the history of the Second World War.

The first lesson is that the main cause of war was and is international imperialism. Its monopolies seek unlimited influence so as to be able to exploit

other countries and peoples. Imperialism was the direct cause of the First and Second World Wars; it gave rise to fascist-militarist regimes which subjected mankind to bloody carnage in order to secure world domination and enslave the peoples. The struggle against war is therefore primarily a struggle against imperialism and its policy of aggression.

The second lesson is that the anti-Soviet policy of international imperialism is a basic factor that led to the Second World War, and it is now the main obstacle to ruling out war from the life of society. It is anti-Sovietism, and the ideology of anti-communism, which today serve as a cover for a new round of the arms race and for imperialism's aggressive plans directed against the world socialist system, the international working-class and the national liberation movements. Thus the fight against war is a fight against anti-Sovietism and for mutually advantageous co-operation of states with different social systems.

The third lesson is that the forces of peace and socialism are invincible. It was the Soviet Union, the world's first state of workers and peasants, that bore the brunt of the fighting against fascist aggression, that made the decisive contribution to the rout of the invaders and saved mankind from fascist enslavement.

International reaction, as in the years preceding the Second World War, is seeking to disunite the forces of peace, democracy and socialism so as to be able to carry out its aggressive plans. Unity of the progressive forces, their tireless and determined struggle for peace and social progress are a key factor in resolving the urgent problem of averting a world nuclear war.